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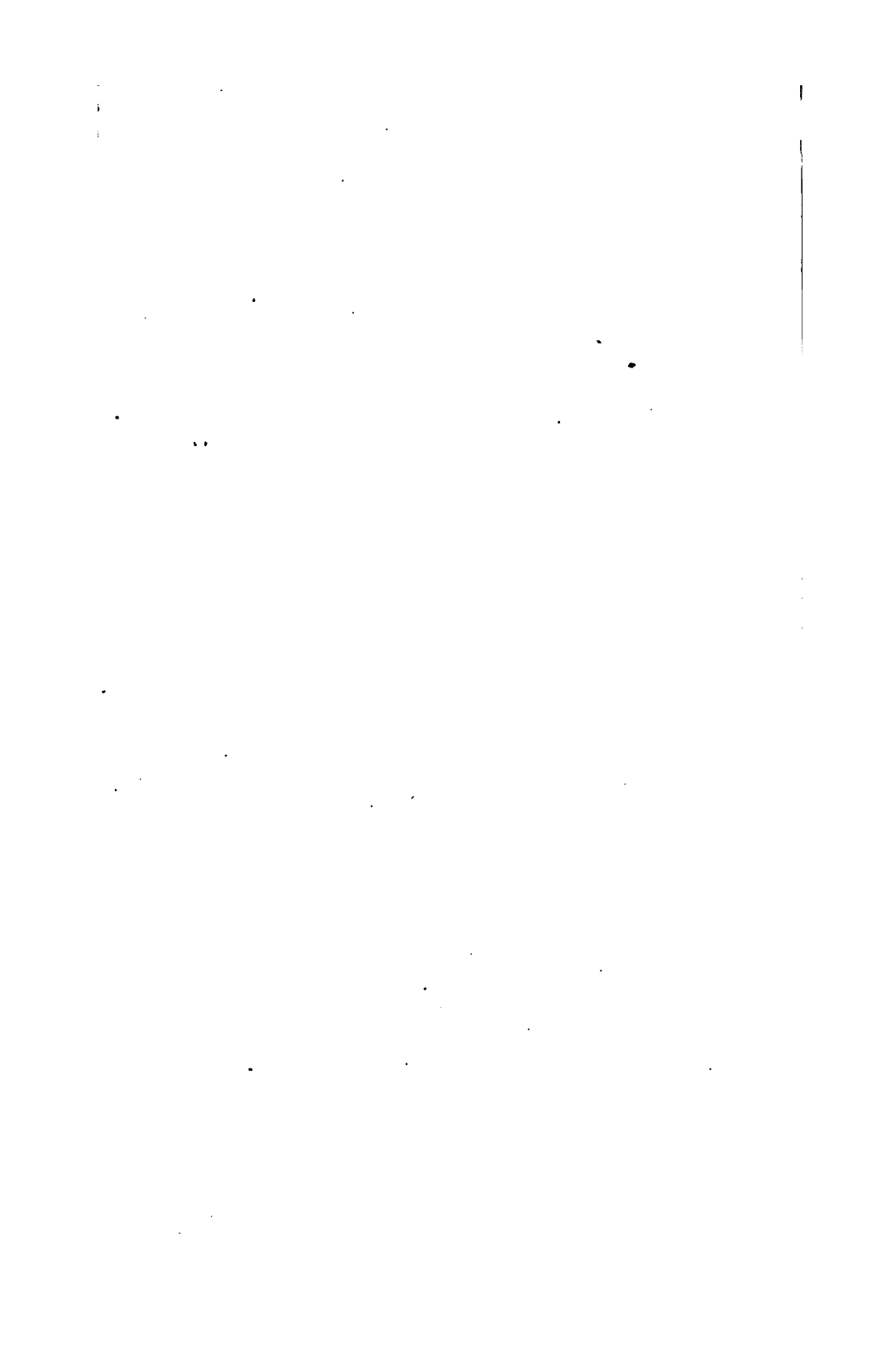




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and the Dean and Mrs. Gresham to go quietly back to Sutton, with the three little girls.

When the idea had first been broached to her by her father, Diana had been quite resigned to the prospect of passing the spring in London. It was not the source of joyful anticipation it had once been to her, but she was content to acquiesce in arrangements, which seemed to give so much pleasure to other people; for Miss Courtenay wrote in ecstasies, and Frank was eager in forming plans for her doing this, and seeing that in his company.

When the time really came, however, our heroine was not quite so much of a philosopher. She could hardly say why or wherefore, but she felt an unconquerable repugnance to the plan, and expressed the most earnest desire to return home instead.

The Dean had never seen his daughter so depressed, but this far from disposing him to rescind his determination, only made him the more sure she ought to make the effort. He knew

Diana did not like "going out," as it is called, which was the very reason he did not fear exposing her to the constant round of gaieties, he was aware Miss Courtenay predestined for her amusement; while the proud indifference his daughter manifested to all the people and things, who had lately been thrown in her way, was in his eyes a fault almost as much to be struggled against, as vanity or frivolity; and he thought it high time she should go into the world and learn that the few members of her own family, whom she loved and esteemed, were not the only people in existence blessed with intellectual attainments, and worth cultivating.

Dr. Gresham could not think it natural that a girl of Diana's age should not care for variety or change of scene; he did not like to allow that his wife was right when she shook her head, and said, "Di was grown old before her time;" but, nevertheless, Mrs. Gresham judged correctly, though she jumped at conclusions while the Dean was reasoning and debating in his

own mind on all the pros and cons of the matter.

At last the thought struck him that perchance Diana might dread a meeting with Lord and Lady Stanford, under these altered circumstances; and though suffering from an attack of cold and influenza, caught at Milly's wedding, he determined on staying a day or two in town, and taking her himself to pay her first visit in Grosvenor Square.

So firmly was this idea impressed upon his mind that it was with something like trepidation when at dinner in Curzon Street, the day of their arrival, that he said casually :

"Having half an hour to spare, after seeing your mother and the children off by the mail train, Diana, I called in Grosvenor Square. Your aunt is very anxious you should go and see her, as she has been confined to the house ever since their arrival in London."

Miss Courtenay, with her usual want of tact, interposed—

"I have not left cards on Lady Stanford this year."

Diana, who little thought this omission was to be laid to her account, hastened to remove the shade of annoyance that came over her father's face, as well as to propitiate her aunt.

"I could walk there with you in the morning, papa, if you have time, which would not interfere with my making a formal visit with my aunt later in the day."

Her free and unembarrassed tones were quite a relief to the Dean, while Miss Courtenay hardly knew how to take her treating it as a matter of course, and of necessity, that she should call in Grosvenor Square.

Next morning Dr. Gresham found it still more difficult to believe that any one, so imaginative as his daughter was by nature, should have so completely put away the past. He did not realise that the strong bias of her mind towards the ideal, had in fact worked its own cure. Her cousin Licnel had been everything to her ; now

he was nothing—less than nothing. By his own act he had shown her he was not what she believed him ; from that moment she had ceased to love him. The ideal had for her lost its identity, and was prized no more.

That it had made her cold and reserved ; that the faith and trust common to her years had died a violent death ; that she despised frivolities, and looked down upon the world with the cynical eye of a much older person, was the inevitable result of such love as hers had been, outraged and betrayed. A less earnest, a less impassioned nature would have been ready to transfer those affections to another object ; to have realised the proverb of “ a heart caught in the rebound.” It was not thus with Diana Gresham. She had dreamed out her dream ; she had awakened from the vision of love, which had once so charmed her senses ; the doubt was whether she would ever meet with any one, who had powers of mind, depths of sentiment, intensity of passion sufficient to

call back into life, and embue with vitality, feelings, whose past power had been proved by their utter annihilation.

Diana would have accused herself of moral cowardice had she shrunk from a duty, which she knew was inevitable. She felt that anxious eyes were on her, as she entered Lady Stanford's room ; she knew that this was the hour for testing the reality of her own self-conquest, for proving it, not only to herself, but to her father.

As is so often the case, if we only would believe it, the pain of anticipation proved to have been far worse than the event itself ; and Lady Stanford, whose pale, harassed face showed how much she had dreaded this first meeting, could hardly believe that it was Di, who, for the first five minutes, bore the principal burden of the conversation, and made her feel as if ten days, and not ten months, had only passed since last she had sat beside her.

It must be confessed, that Milly's marriage,

the latest family event, was a great resource under the circumstances; the history of the wedding told, Lady Stanford ventured to say—

“And how long do you stay in London, Di?”

“Not longer than I can help,” answered she, with something of her old quickness of manner. “I want to be at home before Milly and Captain Glenny come to Sutton.”

“That will not be just yet.”

“In about six weeks time; he wants to take her abroad before they settle anywhere.”

“Where do they mean to live?”

“I do not know; I hardly think Captain Glenny has made up his own mind,” replied Diana.

“And what would Milly like?”

“Whatever would most please her husband; his will is law to her,” said the Dean, with a half smile.

Lady Stanford sighed.

“Come and see me, my love, whenever you

have time to spare from your gaieties," said she, as her niece rose to take her leave. "It will enliven me to hear of your pleasures."

"Di could find it in her heart to cavil at the idea of her taking any pleasure in gaiety," remarked her father, jestingly.

"Is that a true bill, Di?" said her aunt, kindly.

"No; papa only says so to put a stop to my importunities on the score of going home with him," replied Diana. "I suppose I shall like going out as much as other people do, when I get into the habit of it," added she, in a resigned voice.

"Listen to her," said the Dean. "Hers is quite a new edition of the old story of the eels being skinned."

"I can afford to let you laugh at me," said his daughter, "since you owned yesterday, that you should miss me."

"If that is any satisfaction to you, Di, I



am sure you may make yourself quite happy," said Lady Stanford.

Nothing more was said till they reached the street.

"You must promise to send for me, if your cold gets worse, papa; and I am sure that if you are not careful you will have one of your bad attacks."

"What would mamma say to such a slight being put upon her capabilities as a nurse?" asked Doctor Gresham.

"Mamma knows what a very child I am, about being left in London," answered Di, her eyes filling with tears. "I cannot help it, but I feel as if something dreadful was going to happen. I could not go to sleep last night, because I fancied you would be ill. Oh! papa, do take me home!"

Doctor Gresham really idolized his daughter.

"My dear Di, I had no notion you felt so strongly on the subject, when I made a joke of it just now," began he, affectionately.

Di tried to smile.

"It was not that," said she, keeping back her tears.

"I really would gladly take you home with me; for my own sake, I should infinitely prefer it, only it would be such a disappointment to Miss Courtenay."

"I am afraid my aunt will not hear of it, so I had better make up my mind to stay," was the would-be cheerful answer. "I am sorry I have worried you again, papa."

The Dean did not speak for a moment. At length, as they turned into a quiet street, he said, gently—

"If you could assure me, Di, that there is nothing weighing on your mind, more than these vague fears of evil, I should be better satisfied."

"Nothing, papa—really nothing," was the prompt reply.

"If there is any reason, even of the most trivial description, for your dislike to stay in

London, Di, you have only to say one word, to give me the least hint, and I will bear the brunt of your aunt's anger. I will settle it without the smallest reference to yourself, and we will go home to-morrow. Eh, Di?"

"No," said Di, directly; "indeed, it is nothing of the sort."

"Are you quite sure?" returned her father. "Quite sure, that you are not deceiving both yourself and me?"

"Quite sure," repeated she, firmly. "I have tried to trace my presentiment back to some rational source, but in vain. It is always about you, papa; and even the night before we came from C——, I dreamt you told me, you should soon leave Sutton. I did not know why or wherefore, but I was so miserable, that I woke up in tears."

"I must not scold you, Di, because, at your age, I was very nearly as superstitious."

His daughter looked up in his face with the utmost interest.

"It was not till I took orders, and when at my first curacy, I suffered more from them than ever, that I saw in what light to view such imaginations."

"Did you think them wrong?" asked Di.

The Dean answered her question by another—

"Do you remember that quaint, old prayer, which Bob says is still in use at Westminster?"

"'Fantasies, dreams, and other temptations,'" said she, in a low tone.

"That was the passage I wished you to call to mind. I do think that those on whom Heaven has bestowed the gift of a vivid imagination, if they have a keener appreciation of the beautiful, suffer with tenfold power, from fanciful miseries, as well as from all real and substantial causes of annoyance. You have had a great deal to contend with, during the

last year, Di ; and you have met with what will probably be the greatest trial of your life, in so just and right a spirit that I may well be proud of my daughter. But you, who have borne so much unflinchingly, must not succumb before evils, which are only the creations of your own fancy."

Diana was silent awhile. That her father, who was so chary of his praises, should speak in such terms of her, gave her a thrill of joy ; but, after a pause, she took up again the thread of her discourse.

"I wish I did not so implicitly believe in presentiments."

"It is a subject on which it is more than vain to argue, as it is almost impossible to test the truth or the falsehood of impressions, which are seldom recollected, unless verified by circumstances. Yet I would venture to say, that for one presentiment, which is justified by a catastrophe, there are a hundred, which, in that they are causeless, pass by unnoticed."

"Then you do believe that presentiments are not always unfounded?" said Di.

"I think they depend quite as much, if not more, on the health of the body, than on the tone of the mind. Yet I do not deny, that every now and then, when sickness and death have seemed very far off, that some secret instinct of decaying nature, or it may be the soul's impulsive throb as immortality draws on, has warned individuals, that eternity was near; but such instances are rare. In like manner, many poor serving girls have thought themselves inspired, but there has been but one Joan of Arc. Happily, we are not all prophets, when we are depressed."

His daughter sighed.

"Little occasions," said the Dean, answering this expression of feeling, rather than following his own train of thought, "often call for greater efforts, than we choose to believe are necessary. I need not tell you, Di, that our thoughts are subjects, over whom it is ever

wise to reign tyrannically. To crush rebellion in the bud, is a despotic sovereign's best mode of securing safety for himself, and peace for his kingdom."

"And you would advise me to cut off the head of my foolish fancies," said Di, smiling at the metaphor.

"Certainly, and without an hour's reprieve," answered the Dean, in the same spirit. "I am the last person who would wish to advocate a wholesale casting out of reflection," added he, gravely; "but when once you have analysed an unpleasant train of thought, and discovered that it is neither the consequence of a past act, for which we may justly grieve, nor the anticipation of some step of doubtful wisdom, that is weighing on our minds, then, I say, is the time to call in the aid of reason, and religion; if, by their help, we cannot drive away such fantasies, we may indeed have just cause for fear."

"To fear for ourselves," said Di, with

something of the same quaint, matter-of-fact manner, in which, as a little girl, she had been wont to comment on her father's teaching.

His morning walk had convinced Doctor Gresham, that there was no, what he himself would have called, "soreness," remaining in his daughter's mind respecting her relatives in Grosvenor Square ; still he was not sorry that he had staid ; on the contrary, quite as glad for his own sake as for Di's ; for the impression left on his mind, by their conversation, was the reverse of unpleasant ; and he saw the reflection of his own satisfaction in the serene face beside him at dinner, and the arch smile with which, about an hour before midnight, Diana, becomingly arrayed in evening attire, laid her hand on the book, with which he was beguiling his temporary solitude, and told him to look up, and to admire, adding that "fine feathers made fine birds."

"To please, is the first step to being pleased ourselves, eh Di?" said the Dean with a glance at Miss Courtenay's self-satisfied coun-



tenance, for he was skilled enough in the intricacies of the human heart to be well aware that what would have been a source of complaisant vanity to some minds, was the outward and visible sign of self-abnegation in another.

Frank, who was known to be dining in the neighbourhood, was expected to accompany his sister on this her first appearance. He did not arrive quite so soon as Miss Courtenay expected, so Di, who had learnt to practise patience, which the Dean devoutly wished his sister-in-law would do likewise, sat down beside the table, and began carelessly turning over the leaves of a book. Some passage attracted her fancy, and before five minutes had passed, she was far too much engrossed to perceive that her aunt had softly grumbled herself into a dose, or that her father had laid down his Quarterly Review, and was regarding her intently.

He was trying to look at his daughter with

the eyes with which he fancied the world would regard her ; he was marvelling whether other people would see the same beauty in her face which he did. Her features were not regular, it is true, but the rich, yet soft complexion, the statuesque shape of the head, the sunny hair, with that peculiar natural wave, which caught the light in ripples, her tall and stately presence, were likely to win for her a good deal of idle admiration. Idle admiration ! how would Di receive that ?

The Dean shook his head involuntarily. Would any one appreciate the higher qualities of head and heart, which, in his daughter, as he thought, so far surpassed the mere outward beauty of face and form ? He hardly knew.

Miss Courtenay had that day casually spoken of Diana's marriage. Of her making a good match. The idea was most repugnant to him. He had silenced his sister-in-law then, but he could not always do this. No, he looked at his daughter ; as she read, a shadow of deep

thought had stolen over her brow, a soft, earnest expression had replaced the smile about her mouth, investing her with a tranquil, angelic beauty, which more than any words could have done, answered his doubts and strengthened his faith. Di would not marry yet; possibly not at all.

And with this idea he tried to console himself. The Dean looked on life as a philosopher, and yet as a Christian. He had thought it would be well for his daughter to see something of that world, whose littleness and puerilities he had well-nigh forgotten. In the world of literature he had taken a more enlarged view of the progress of society, than exactly tallied with the realities of social life. Miss Courtenay's worldly wisdom and value for things, which, in his opinion, were the merest dross, had gone some way towards opening his eyes. Admiration, adulation, to stand well with the world, to make a great marriage; what were they but that "vanity and vexation

of spirit," which one who had tried all these varied forms of allurements had, long years ago, pronounced them to be.

Just at this moment, as though to confirm the truth of this aphorism, in walked Frank, and by way of encouragement to his sister in her new career, began an unsparing criticism on her dress and appearance.

"Diana will not be spoiled by flattery, if you can help it," said the Dean, in a tone of mild rebuke, after his son had declared he hated white, and that Di ought to wear flowers in her hair, instead of those long loops of dark velvet.

Miss Courtenay thought her taste was impugned, and took up the cudgels; opposition only made Frank rather more positive, and though Di despised herself for being cast down by such a trifle as a discussion on her personal attire, she walked up the staircase, a perfect avenue of exotics, and into a gay and gorgeous saloon,

bright with light, and re-echoing the sweetest sounds, with a sinking of heart, which though often felt, is not often ascribed to a *débutante*, in the zenith of her youth and beauty.

## CHAPTER II.

Theirs was a sudden meeting, yet it woke  
No change in her fair face——

ANON.

Our heroine had been very much relieved on finding, that a private concert, not a ball, was the form in which she was to swallow her first dose of dissipation. Grisi and Mario were singing, and though Diana had little taste for music, she had a soul, and listened with wrapt attention to the wondrous melody, which though the words fell indistinctly on her unpractised ear, spoke of love in all its forms and phases, with strange and thrilling power. And for a few brief moments, she too believed there was truth in the fanatic cry, "that in

our days, were it not for music, we might well say, the beautiful is dead."

No more palpable proof of the fallacy of this high-sounding sentiment could have been devised, than the instrumental performance of a modern wonder, which succeeded. It was very brilliant, it was very wonderful, more, it was astonishing, that anything short of a railroad should travel with such rapidity over the keys. It was quite in the taste of the age, but Diana was disenchanted, and from the clouds of fancy, whither the voice of song had raised her, she came back to earth, and to the recollection that she was sitting on a formal row of chairs, beside her aunt, and tasting of the charms of good society, working at the treadmill, upon which so many victims immolate themselves. And before the first half of the entertainment was over, she began to wonder whether the crowd around her were deluded enough to think that this was pleasure.

Nobody spoke to her until Miss Courtenay, when a pause in the music released her from the longest period of silence she had ever known her preserve, introduced her niece to two or three Dowagers within reach ; but a few interrogations on whether they had been here, or were going there, seemed to comprise all their ideas, and to make up the bulk of their conversation. Diana did not like to acknowledge to herself that she found it worse than dull ; it was quite a relief when she caught sight of Frank—who had parted with them on the landing, and whom she had vainly looked for since—standing in the door-way, of which she had a side view. He was not looking at her, however, but following and, for him, talking quite eagerly to a lady, who had just entered the room, and who on her part raised her eyes to his face, smiled and listened with the most flattering attention. She did not say much, but Diana noticed that



she made him laugh by a little pantomimic expression of disgust and alarm, when the lady of the house looked round to find her a seat within the room. Our heroine was well amused in watching them; she thought she was a young lady, and began to fancy Frank was very much in love, and to speculate as to how she should get on with a sister-in-law. Just at that moment the object of her interest caught sight of Miss Courtenay, and bowed.

Diana looked round, and saw with surprise the very frigid bend of the head with which Miss Courtenay responded to the salutation, and to the stereotyped smile, which accompanied it. She was just going to ask the name of Frank's friend, when an old lady on the other side of her aunt whispered—

“She is looking her best to-night. Some people call her pretty, and certainly the young men run after her amazingly.”

"Humph," answered Miss Courtenay, "'one fool makes many,' and as to her looks, it is her dress which is pretty, not herself."

"Perhaps it is, but people do not care to weigh what it is which pleases."

"I cannot see how a person with irregular features, and such a sallow complexion can be said to have any real pretensions to beauty," replied Miss Courtenay, sharply.

"Nor do I, but half the people here to-night, would tell you Mrs. Gresham was lovely."

Miss Courtenay turned quickly round to see if her niece chanced to be listening. There was a brighter color on Di's cheek than usual, but that might be the heat of the room, and her aunt thought her quite engrossed with the programme of the entertainment, on which her eyes were bent, for her features were still and immoveable as ever.

After all, it was nothing more than Diana Gresham had expected, nothing more than what

she knew must happen some day, and yet it annoyed Di to hear her aunt's sarcastic remarks, for she guessed the secret spring of these bitter words. She tried to shut her ears to them, strove to concentrate all her thoughts and attention on the singers and the music. She was putting the teaching of the morning into practice, with what success she might. And, at any rate, her eyes never strayed again in the direction of the door.

Towards the end of the concert, when a few departures left some chairs vacant, Frank found his way up to his sister.

"Are you enjoying it, Di? but I need hardly ask, for you have been quite engrossed by the music for the last hour; you have never looked round once."

"Some of the singing has been most beautiful," returned she, evasively.

"And you have enjoyed it?" persisted Frank.

"Yes," said Di. There was a doubtful look

in his face which made her add, " 'sadly, you know, after the fashion of our country,' as old Froissart has it in his chronicles.

It was one of the many true words spoken in jest, but Frank was very glad to be deceived.

"Will you come down to supper?" asked he, the next time the music paused. "There are more people down stairs now than up."

"Yes, my dear, do go," said her aunt, when appealed to.

"This sort of thing must be very dull to you, who know nobody as yet," remarked her brother, as a crowd on the staircase stopped their further progress.

"It quite comes up to my expectations."

She spoke so tranquilly that he never suspected that pleasure had not formed part of her anticipations.

"Oh! that is all very well now; you will look back on your first party as stupidity itself, when you get into the full swing and know all these people," said Frank, whose

every word was interspersed with "how are you? How do, old fellow," from his own friends, and with more courteous responses, "how do you do, Mr. Gresham," uttered in every key and by many silvery voices.

"I think I like playing the part of spectator best. You know, Frank, I never can make conversation," remarked his sister.

"Talk to people in general, as you do to me," said Frank. "Now what will you have to eat?"

"Anything."

"Don't say that to any bashful young man, except myself," said he, walking off to the supper table.

He had hardly left her side, ere the person Diana least wished to see, came in. She was speaking French with the purest pronunciation and most perfect composure, very different from most English women's efforts, in a foreign tongue, and which seemed vastly to delight the tall, dissipated looking foreigner, on whose arm she was leaning. Diana instinctively

shrunk back, but the very action attracted Mrs. Gresham's attention towards her. She broke off in the middle of a sentence, and coming up to our heroine, said—

“Miss Gresham, I really must introduce myself, I told your brother, just now, that we must be friends.” She did not give Diana time to answer, she quite overwhelmed her with her ease. “Ah! Frank, I have made your sister's acquaintance, and no thanks to your intervention.”

Frank, who at this moment returned, looked annoyed.

“I thought you were gone home,” said he.

“Is that an apology, or a specimen of your English politeness? I did not think you were such a bear. But never mind,” proceeded Florence, turning to Diana, “he has been cross all the evening; I asked him to bring you to see me, and all the answer I got was, that he could make no rash promises.”

Diana found she was expected to speak.

"I called in Grosvenor Square this morning," said she, in that quiet, staid, manner, which is so often a covering to an inward struggle. She could not force herself into warmth.

An ejaculation of the supremest contempt, advised Diana she had made some mistake—

"I do not live there," said her new relative, with emphasis. "You must come down to Belgravia, to find me. Miss Courtenay detests me, I know, but that is no reason *you* should not come to my house, though I dare not even leave a card in Curzon Street."

The exceeding freedom of her speech, and her very contemptuous tone, did not please Diana, nor amuse her as much as it did her brother.

"I shall be most happy," was the rather formal answer, though Di by no means honored herself for conforming so far to the habitual untruths of society, "but my time and my movements are not altogether at my own disposal."

"You must come, if you can, I will not take an excuse," said Florence, who was in a most pertinacious humour. "Now I do not ride, I always have tea at five; it is the only thing in dull formal England which seems to have the power to make people sociable. Frank, you must bring your sister, she can have nothing better to do at that hour."

There was nothing for it but to receive these advances with the best grace she could assume. Frank would willingly have helped his sister out of her dilemma, but he had, somehow or other, he hardly knew how, for he began by disliking her excessively, become very intimate with Florence. He still hated Lionel with all his heart, but it was by no means a matter of course, that he should come in contact with him, whenever he saw his wife.

Florence, and her unhappy husband were living in London. They had just settled their plans when Frank was at Sutton Priors, in the winter, and he had heard as much about them as



any body, while Diana, from the same mistaken principle of kindness, which had prevented Lord and Lady Stanford from ever mentioning her before their son, had heard nothing about them, and hardly knew for certain that they were in England.

Lord Stanford did not much like the scheme of their residence in London, but Florence was bent on it, Lionel passive, and Lady Stanford's opinion, for a wonder, was totally at variance with that of her Lord. He had pleased himself with repairing and restoring a pretty shooting box which was situated on the sea-coast, at the extremity of a small estate which had come by marriage into the Gresham family, and which lay about fifteen miles off from the rest of the Sutton property. It was a wild, picturesque spot, the shooting particularly good, and within reach of the same hunting country, as Sutton itself, but with nothing like a neighbourhood; there was but one gentleman's place within a circuit of many miles; that was

close at hand, though the possessor of it was too poor to live in his large old scrambling house.

Lady Stanford was in despair. Hunting and shooting were all very well, and certainly filled up part of the year, but at other times Lionel and Florence would be thrown entirely on their own resources, and the utter solitude and seclusion, to her thinking, were likely to be as prejudicial to the one, as they would be intolerable to the other. Happily, Lord Stanford never took any decided step without his wife's concurrence ; she had a hard struggle at first, and more than once despaired. Lionel's state of spirits were her best, and, indeed, only argument. As the novelty of being at home had worn off, his fits of depression had increased. There were times when his mother almost feared for his reason. Lord Stanford saw that there was truth in what she urged ; their son was fast degenerating into a moody, melancholy man ; in the bustle and stir of action

there might be a hope of rousing him, of taking him out of himself. Life, in the largest city in the world, must present some variety of aspect, afford some object of interest to one, on whom the terrible earnest of a single false step, pressed so heavily; one too, who appeared utterly incapable of the strength of will, which can thrust its thought away, once and for ever.

At the present moment Diana was the sufferer from Lionel's want of resolution. Florence liked Frank better than any of the Greshams she had ever seen; and the certain degree of mystery, which had always hung over his sister, and, indeed, the reserve with which he still spoke of her, led her to be particularly anxious to make her acquaintance. Under any other circumstances this pertinacity might have been taken as a compliment; as it was, it was most annoying.

Florence saw she was not making the progress she could wish; but it was not the first

time in her life that she had been resolved on conquering a prejudice. Flattery tells on most people; so, at least, her experience of the world led her to believe, and turning to Di, who, for the last few minutes, had been patiently listening to a mock quarrel between her new relative and Frank, she said—

“You, who are so clever, must think all this sad nonsense.”

Diana denied the charge; she could do so with all truth, for Florence had a peculiarly measured, graceful mode of utterance, and style of pronunciation, which was something quite new to our heroine, who had never yet seen a play, and who was ignorant how much power and expression an accomplished actress can impart to the merest nothings. Mrs. Gresham was neither very witty, very agreeable, or very talkative, but she always contrived to give people, particularly gentlemen, the impression that she meant much more than she actually said.

So long as she was not speaking to herself, Diana drank in every word which fell from Mrs. Gresham's lips, with a curiosity which almost arrived at fascination. The moment, however, she was called on to answer for herself, she felt uncomfortably conscious that she was shy and ill at ease ; which feeling those dark, piercing eyes fixed upon her own, did not tend to lessen.

Her hesitation was not unmarked by Florence.

"You need not look reproachfully at Frank, as if he had been praising you," said she. "It was a very different person. Can you not guess who?"

"Indeed, I cannot ; seeing that I do not at all deserve such a distinction."

"Ah !" said Florence, with mock gravity, "that is the way with us all ; I dare say you think yourself very stupid, and rather plain than otherwise, I do."

Frank laughed, and Diana could not help

being amused, at the air with which Florence said this. She very well knew that she was good looking, but she valued herself far more on her powers of mind, a by no means uncommon vanity among women—the best of whom are quite as much flattered at being thought clever, as many a wise man is, at being told he is handsome.

“As I was telling your brother, I should have known you anywhere, from your resemblance to that exquisite picture by Sir Peter Lely, at Sutton Priors. Lionel pointed it out to me long ago, as being exactly like his favorite cousin.”

What was it that made Diana's cheeks burn like fire, and brought a glow even into Frank's manly face? She had repeatedly told herself it was unwomanly and unworthy to retain the smallest particle of affection, for one who had ceased to think of her. She had stifled all her love for her cousin—quenched the last lingering spark of passion, without giving way to

one instinct of self pity. The strong, steady, unswerving principles in which the Dean had brought up his children, had enabled his daughter to renounce and forsake the idol of her youth.

It was a case in which the right and wrong were very clearly discernible, and a sense of duty had triumphed over woman's weakness. Not that our heroine was a perfect character; for there was a strong leaven of pride, in the firmness and immobility with which she met trials, before which most women would have quailed. Diana Gresham herself, was all unconscious she still nurtured a feeling which, while the world admires, and philosophers uphold, one simple volume only, the work, for the most part, of poor and illiterate men, condemns.

How few look on pride in this its true light, and yet it was that which sent so sharp a pang through her heart, as she thought of Lionel,

praising her beauty—extolling her attainments, and speaking of her as his “favorite cousin.”

“I suppose I ought to feel very much flattered,” said she, in a tone in which pride and humility were so strangely blended, that Frank hardly knew how to interpret it.

“By the way, have you seen Lionel to-night?” remarked Florence.

“No.”

The brevity of this answer rather surprised her to whom it was addressed.

“He will be very much disgusted when he hears I have seen you, and that he has missed the pleasure. He has so often talked to me about his cousin Di,” said Florence; who never troubled herself about sticking to the truth.

“Our worthy aunt will be wondering where we are,” interrupted Frank; who thought it full time an end should be put to this scene.

He began to suspect that Florence knew nothing of antecedent events; but he saw, by a lightning glance which flashed on her for a



moment, from his sister's eye, by the disdainful curl of her lip, as with an overstrained politeness she bade Mrs. Gresham "good night!" that she put a very different construction on words which were indeed intended for compliment.

"Come Di!" and he held out his arm.

There was a world of strife and bitterness gnawing at her heart, as she obeyed mechanically and moved away. She could not brook the thought of feelings, once so fondly cherished, of emotions, which in times past she had deemed so sacred, being dragged forth from their graves, and treated as idle fancies—spoken of as childish dreams between Lionel and his wife. She almost despised herself for ever having loved him; and, if any softer feeling, if any tender regret for the past, lurked unbidden in her bosom, that moment saw it give up the ghost—breathe its last sigh. Pride reigned dominant over every other passion.

In such a mood as this, Diana Gresham met the cousin who had left her hardly three years ago with such fond protestations of eternal love. At the foot of the stairs, nerving himself for a meeting which he knew was inevitable, stood Lionel. There was little similitude between the handsome stripling—whose face memory reflected back so clearly—and the tall, dark, melancholy man, whose eyes fell beneath her steady gaze. Time had not wrought more change there than it had on the heart, which had once throbbed responsive to his most tender words of love. There was an instant's silence, as they stood facing each other, unconsciously noting the change made in each by days, which left long, lengthened shadows, though their suns had set.

The figures crowded round, vanished into strange nothingness; the sounds of mirth and revelry were as the distant murmurs in a dream; and Lionel only felt that one human

soul was near, towards whom his heart leapt with an impulse of affection, boundless, irrepressible, as of old.

There are moments in life, single moments in duration, so replete with remorse, regret, and agony, that in them seem to be concentrated the sorrow of a lifetime. Such was that in which his cousin's calm, indifferent, and collected greeting brought back to him the memory of what an impassable gulf lay between them. Till that hour, he had never realised that he had forfeited every claim upon her regard; he had lived upon the delusion that he was keeping the secret of her love, as well as of his own. In daily dreams, in nightly visions, she, an angel of sweetness, love, and tenderness, had never yet deserted him. Now she glided away like an avenging spirit, coldly, carelessly, unmoved, leaving him to look fearfully down into those terrible abysses of the human heart, where peace and strife, time and

eternity, the mad passions of the flesh, and the silent, immortal spirit wage, the one against the other, a war, which is as devastating in the traces it leaves behind, as it is terrible in action.

## CHAPTER III.

Why, alas ! should heaven sever,  
Hearts which love has joined together ?  
Or why has love so often tied,  
Hearts that heaven would divide ?

## TRANSLATION.

AND so our heroine was launched into the vortex of a London season. Miss Courtenay, according to her favorite axiom, would not have believed she had done her duty, either to herself or towards her niece, had she not taken her here, there, and everywhere. Diana sometimes thought that six weeks or two months was too much of her life to waste in the pursuit of gaiety, which, truth to tell, was little or no pleasure to her, and at others consoled herself with the idea that the time would pass very

quickly, and that her penance would soon be over.

Her first party was the only one to which she looked back with positive pain, for when she came to think it over, she was more ashamed of herself for the bitterness with which she regarded Florence than many other people would have been, for having given way to a positive outbreak of anger.

Frank was astonished, when some little time after, as he was helping his sister to clamber up into his high phaeton—for there was nothing which other young men had which Miss Courtenay did not make a point of bestowing upon her nephew—to hear her say—

“What do you think of calling on Mrs. Gresham to-day?”

“It is just as you please,” was his answer, as he carefully adjusted his reins.

“My aunt does not like to call herself, but she said she had no objection to my going with you.”

Such was Diana's modified version of the very sharp words that the least mention of Mrs. Gresham's name had elicited from Miss Courtenay.

"Very good," and Frank turned his horses' heads towards Hyde Park Corner. After a few minutes' silence, he said, looking straight before him, "If you think it a bore, I could make it all right with Florence. She knows Miss Courtenay has her little peculiarities."

"I know my aunt says she is too old to make new friends, and that her acquaintance is already large enough," returned Di. "But considering that Uncle Stanford's house is quite a second home to us, and that Mrs. Gresham is likely to be a great deal at Sutton Priors, it might seem ungracious, if after all she has said, I were to avail myself of so trifling an excuse."

"Now for it then," was her brother's reply; "for here we are."

The answer given at the door was "not at home." Frank guessed, from the sort of re-

lieved sigh which Diana involuntarily uttered, as they drove off again, that she felt it an escape, and was more than ever convinced in his own mind, that his sister had done what was most disagreeable to her, because she thought it right.

Next morning at breakfast, Miss Courtenay pushed away the paper angrily.

"Well, I, for one, am quite taken by surprise; however, there is no great cause for rejoicing—it's only a girl."

"What? who?" said Diana, in some surprise.

"Never mind, my dear, you will hear it soon enough, for I suppose you will be going to Grosvenor Square again this morning."

"Aunt Alicia's days in London, when she is quite confined to the house, are so much more tedious than they are in the country," said Di, apologetically.

"I am sure if you like to go there, I have no objection," retorted Miss Courtenay, who,



vexed with other people, could not refrain from venting her pettishness on her niece.

A few minutes after, Diana took up the paper.

“‘The Honorable Mrs. Gresham of a daughter.’ I wonder who it is ; I did not know there was any other family of Greshams besides ourselves,” said she, unconsciously.

“You don’t call your uncle’s son’s wife one of the family, then ?” answered Miss Courtenay, sharply.

“Florence ! impossible.”

“It must be her ; she is the only Honorable Mrs. Gresham besides your father’s wife,” returned Miss Courtenay, who had the peerage at her fingers’ ends. “It cannot well be anybody else ; for it is not likely there should be two Mrs. Greshams, gentle or simple, living in Lowndes Street. It is by no means a common name.”

“But,” said Di, “she was at Lady Calcraft’s ball only the night before last.”

"Oh!" retorted Miss Courtenay, spitefully, "I know there has always been fuss enough before all your little sisters were born; but these fine London ladies would rather keep out and about, than coddle themselves at home. Not that I hold your new cousin up as a pattern; she is just like all the young married women of the present day, dancing and flirting, flirting and dancing, all night long. I want to know where it is to end? And, as to Frank, he is quite as silly about her as any of the other young men. I call it very bad taste in him to run after his cousin's wife as he does."

If there was any little secret source of unhappiness or disquiet hidden down in the depths of Diana's heart, its source and spring was in her brother's admiration of Florence. As a mere chance had informed her, hardly a day passed that he did not call in Lowndes Street, and she had ocular demonstration of the fact, that night after night he was foremost in

the train of young Lords and Guardsmen who flocked round Mrs. Gresham's chair; while, on the score of his relationship, he was more intimate with her, and made of more use by her, than all the rest of them put together.

Diana had no reason to complain of any neglect on Frank's part; he was just as fond of her, just as kind to her as ever. He would come and fetch her to walk—he would take her out in his phaeton—and what she enjoyed still more, he had over-ruled all Miss Courtenay's objections to her riding, and his favorite horse was at her service, whenever there was a good match at Lord's, "or any play at the Oval." Diana and he had played cricket together for a great many years of their joint lives, so she had a practical knowledge of the game, and never wearied of watching its progress; indeed she was quite as much interested, if not quite so much excited as her brother was when a K—— man went in, for the Greshams had been born and bred in a county celebrated

for its cricketers and cricketing; and Frank, though too fine a gentleman to ride in Rotten Row, for he told his sister, "no fellow except a dragoon, or unless he happened to be in love, and had an object in it, could so bore himself," did not think it beneath his dignity to cheer at the top of his lungs, or roar out "well played," "run again, run again," whenever his sympathies were enlisted on the side of a native of his dearly beloved K——.

Moreover, Diana knew that in Florence's very presence, he did not forget her, it was not that which annoyed her; he could not dance with his own sister, nor could she expect him to sit by her all night, and he was always ready to take her down stairs, to come and point out anybody like a public character, whom he thought she might like to see; and if there was nothing more particular to bring him, always came to enquire, "how she was getting on."

To do Florence justice, she would really

have been very glad to have made friends with Di, to have admitted her into her own coterie ; and, as she perpetually told Frank—“if she only knew how to take advantage of it, his sister was one of the best looking, best dressed, and most elegant girls in London, and she should like to initiate her a little into the ways of the world ;” but Frank did not particularly wish this ; for however much men are themselves fascinated by this style of character, they are by no means ambitious to see their wives and sisters play the part of sirens. He had no need to fear, for Di hung back pertinaciously. She was perfectly polite, perfectly courteous ; but she shrunk from anything like intimacy with her cousin’s wife.

Her inherent pride, her feminine delicacy, both rose up in arms, against anything more than the ordinary civilities consequent on their relationship ; and these feelings were sorely wounded by Frank’s open exhibition of his admiration for Florence, rendered the more

glaring a solecism in her eyes by its contrast with the way in which he treated Lionel, who always accompanied his wife. Diana had never again been near enough to her cousin to do more than bow ; but she had seen Frank ignore his presence, hardly speak to him when he was obliged to see him, and, altogether, testify towards him a polite rudeness, which pained her inexpressibly ; for she could not altogether forget that, from their cradles, Frank and Lionel had been more like brothers than cousins. She knew that there could never be the same cordiality and unreserved friendship between them, as of old ; but it was not right in Frank to make so marked a distinction in his conduct towards his cousin and his cousin's wife. She was sure it was not.

However, she would not have allowed to Miss Courtenay that Frank was wrong for worlds ; and this was not the first time she had got herself into disgrace, by attempting to

palliate what her aunt declared was "a stern fact."

Miss Courtenay had always been as jealous of Di's affection for Lady Stanford as possible; and had it not been for the fear of the Dean, would have put a positive veto on her daily visits to Grosvenor Square. Happily, however, for that young lady, she was as great a favourite with her aunt's household, as with her aunt herself; and if the one party was a little tyrannical, the other were her devoted slaves. And Gog and Magog—as Frank, in derision, had surnamed the fat, old butler, and the portly footman, who were both as broad as they were long—were always, the one or the other of them, ready to volunteer a donning of hat and gloves, and to wheeze close behind her up the long street, which ran between the mansions of her relatives. A departure from the strict line of the duties of his calling, which Gog would not have submitted to for

any one else ; not even for the mistress, whom, when as young as her niece, he had served as foot-boy, and to preside over whose household as majordomo, he had left, what he himself proudly called "a titled family," in the far later days of her prosperity.

To our heroine, that was the happiest hour in the twenty-four, which was passed in Lady Stanford's dressing-room. She did not know—few people did—what agonies of suffering that pretty, cheerful-looking room constantly witnessed. She never guessed that in that atmosphere of peace and rest, where every little annoyance, every petty discomfort seemed charmed away by the even cheerfulness and kind sympathy of her gentle relative, were passed hours of pain, when the weak, fragile body writhed in agony, and dews of anguish stood on a face, on which patience, resignation, and the most perfect tranquillity, at other times shone conspicuous. People said, Lady Stanford was nervous and fanciful, who little



guessed at sufferings, which she bore with a martyr's patience, and of whose extent she kept even her husband in ignorance, lest it should add to the care and sorrow she knew he felt for his invalid wife.

This morning, for the first time, Diana found Lionel sitting by his mother's sofa. He rose, pushed back his chair, and stood undecided, as she bestowed on Lady Stanford her usual morning greeting. She held out her hand to him.

"I am glad to see you, Lionel," said she, in her old, frank, natural manner, "to congratulate you on your little daughter; how is—"

Her sentence was cut short; her cousin took the soft, white hand extended to him, held it for a second, almost crushing it in his fierce grasp, and the next moment dropped it, as if it were fire, and had closed the door behind him with a bang ere she could utter the enquiry after Florence's welfare which was hovering on her lips.

She looked after him in mute astonishment.

"I suppose he is disappointed that it is not a boy; I ought not to have alluded to its being a daughter," said she, quite satisfied at this solution of her cousin's abruptness.

"It is a disappointment," answered Lady Stanford.

Diana did not notice that she did not connect the disappointment with her son.

"But perhaps it is better as it is; for the poor little thing was not expected to live through the night."

"Oh! I hope it will not die," said our heroine, who remembered how her step-mother had grieved over the loss of a little brother, who had expired a few weeks after his birth.

"So do I, earnestly," returned Lady Stanford. "Florence pretended not to care about it beforehand, and would hardly listen to me, when one day at Sutton I spoke to her on the subject; but as she eventually followed the

advice she appeared to despise, I am not without a hope that she will love the child she then pledged herself to dislike."

"People always love their own children, if they think other people's a bore," remarked Diana, who had opened her eyes at this new trait in her cousin's character.

"Most people profess to love their husbands," was Lady Stanford's unuttered thought.

"I heard from mamma this morning," said Di, finding her aunt did not resume the subject. "Papa is better again."

"I am very glad to hear it," answered Lady Stanford.

"Mamma says, if he would only lay up, and give himself complete rest, for a day or two, she thinks he would quite shake off his cold; but from having been so long away, there is so much to be done in the parish, that she cannot keep him quiet; and he persists it cannot hurt him to go out, while the weather is so fine."

"There is a very treacherous east wind," remarked Lady Stanford.

"Papa never takes what I call real care of himself," said Di, gravely; "he always says, 'it is better to wear out, than to rust out!'"

"Has he seen Mr. Rogers again?"

"Yes; and he told him he had got a regular attack of influenza, and bade him stay in doors; but I know what papa does when he stays in doors, and thinks himself very careful. People come round to his study window all the morning long, and he stands with it open, listening to their complaints. Even Dame Meeks cannot fat a pig without 'axing his reverence's counsel,'" said Di, ending her speech in imitation of their county dialect.

"He is better now; that is a great comfort," returned her aunt.

Next day, Lionel was there again, and this time he behaved more like a rational being, thanks to his mother's schooling; but of this

Diana knew nothing; she thought he was very quiet and depressed, quite as low-spirited as he used sometimes to be. In society she had not time to observe him closely; and she never guessed that his melancholy was habitual, not occasional now. She was sorry for him, for she knew Florence was very ill, and that the baby's life still hung upon a thread; of course he was anxious; and she thought it very unfeeling when her uncle, who came up after Lionel was gone, on hearing this unsatisfactory bulletin, muttered something about its being "all Florence's own fault—she might thank her own wilful imprudence if the child did die;" and, furthermore, kindly prophesied, "that if it lived, it would most likely be a cripple."

The following day Lionel came in, before Diana had been there ten minutes, but as after a better report of his wife and child, he sat himself down at the other end of the room to

write letters, he did not interrupt the flow of her discourse with her aunt so much as on the previous day.

A third time this occurred. Diana did not say to herself she did not like being thrown so much with her cousin, but she settled in her own mind that Lionel's presence spoiled the comfort of her visits ; so, on the morrow, she arranged to walk up directly after luncheon, when all the world were quiet, and stay there till Miss Courtenay called for her in the carriage. She might have spared herself the arguments and persuasions this arrangement cost her, for there sat Lionel, having been there all the morning, and, apparently having no thoughts of taking his departure. Finally, for one day she staid away altogether, satisfying herself with the thought, that if Lionel was so much with his mother, Lady Stanford could not want her.

Lady Stanford was not of this opinion, for she took it into her head that Miss Courtenay

had put her veto on Diana's visits, and wrote such a nice note to that lady, and sent such a magnificent basket of peaches, from the Sutton Priors' hot houses, when, as Gog said, "they were five shillings a-piece in Covent Garden Market," that the propitiated spinster decided that the headache, under plea of which her niece was preparing to stay at home again, would be the better for the walk up to Grosvenor Square.

So Diana resumed her habitual visits, and resigned herself to the infliction of Lionel's being generally in the room for full half of the time she staid; and blamed herself for selfishness, because she would so much rather have remained away under the circumstances; for Lionel rarely spoke, and seldom or never addressed her if he did, but generally sat in the further window, reading or writing.

Lady Stanford, on the contrary, believed that her presence would prove an actual benefit to her son, Lionel had never again, in so

many words, said that he still loved Diana, but from little things, casual remarks dropped in the course of their conversations, particularly after his first meeting with his cousin, his mother arrived at the conclusion that time had but little changed the feelings, whose expression had drawn from her almost the only harsh words, she had ever addressed to her son. She more than guessed that, till then, he had secretly hugged himself in the belief that his cousin would be, to a certain extent, if not altogether, what she had before been to him. Lady Stanford viewed Lionel's prepossessions in this matter as a species of monomania, which reasoning and argument would increase rather than remove. She saw he had been immensely struck by the great change in Diana's manner to him, and she flattered herself that as every day brought more clearly before him, the perfect indifference, and the entire unconcern with which his cousin treated him, so would he gradually be brought to realise the



true state of affairs, the utter impossibility of her ever entertaining, for him, more than a cold, tranquil friendship.

She had, the first day, been frightened by the violence he testified, when Diana spoke as if the birth of his child were a subject of congratulation. She told him, the next day, that if he had not more command over himself, he had better avoid meeting his cousin; but Lionel professed himself penitent, and promised it should never happen again, and Lady Stanford really thought it wiser not to pursue the subject. If her son were indeed weak and wicked enough to cherish a passion for his cousin, her part must be steadfastly to ignore the very existence of any such feeling; if nothing was said about it, if she never allowed him to express his love in words, it would most probably die a natural death. It was a case in which a confidence, even between a mother and her child, would be better avoided.

The ultimate object his mother now had

before her, was the desire to bring about a perfect and complete reconciliation between Lionel and his wife, for with all his efforts, and he had taken the very highest grounds in his mediation at Baden-Baden, his quondam tutor, Mr. Douglas, had only been able to patch up a very hollow truce, to bring about nothing more than a cessation of hostilities. He had averted an open separation, and that was all. And since Lady Stanford had become aware of how very far apart the husband and wife stood, she had lived in constant dread of some decided rupture. To prevent this, she had insisted upon Lionel's going into society with Florence. In this, as in every age of the world, the name and presence of a husband is a sort of protection, a very poor one it is true, but still sorely needed by one who had so wilfully estranged herself from her duties as Florence had done, and still gloried in doing.

From the bed of sickness, where, "the snares of death had compassed her round about," she argued that Florence must surely rise a wiser

and a better woman ; some gentle feelings, some softer emotions, must spring up even in her worldly bosom, and manifest themselves towards the father of her child. Might not that unconscious little one prove a heaven sent messenger of peace, the bond of a life-long reunion of hearts, which, however widely severed, one must now acknowledge one common source of interest.

## CHAPTER IV.

Certes ! to those who might more closely mark,  
That dove brought none of gladness to his ark ;  
No loving step to meet him homeward flew.

\* \* \* \* \*

The greeting kiss, the tender trustful talk,  
Arm linked in arm—the dear familiar walk,  
The sweet domestic interchange of cares,  
Memories and hopes—this union was not theirs.

THE NEW TIMON

MEN seldom persist in playing out the drama of "Love's Labour Lost;" it is, for the most part, the weaker sex who cherish in their innermost hearts the remembrance of a love, which, oftentimes, is as dead and insensible as the blasted, withered branch round which the tender clinging parasite twines its tendrils.

And Lionel was no exception to this general rule, besides that the great fault of his character—his susceptibility to outward influences—at this time led him gradually and unconsciously to carry out his mother's wishes

It was not a little fortunate that our heroine knew nothing of the circumstances preceding her cousin's marriage; this was an incalculable benefit to all parties, for Diana was, perhaps, the only one of his relations who treated Lionel as if he actually were the happy, prosperous man outward seeming represented him. It is in human nature that man should accommodate himself to the circumstances in which he is placed, and Lionel had not been in his cousin's company a dozen times, before taking his cue from her manner, his thoughts insensibly acquired a happier coloring. His morbid melancholy was very different from her cynicism. The past was not to be recalled; he felt that now, and at last realised that it was his part to be content and seek for happiness in that po-

sition in which his own act had placed him. Constant intercourse with his mother had quickened and renewed the early principles it had been her great aim to instil. Lionel could not judge harshly nor think hardly of the wife, the very thought of whose possible death had so lately filled him with such unspeakable horror and remorse.

Day by day this hope became more stable, took a more tangible form. Lady Stanford guessing at the workings of her son's mind, would fain have stirred him on to some decided step, but she dared not lest she should mar the happiness she was so anxious to promote ; it remained for his cousin by a few casual, though earnest words, to rouse poor Lionel into action.

Such was the state of affairs, when, one morning Frank walked up from Curzon Street with Diana, and left her in Grosvenor Square, faithfully promising to call for her again soon after one. Half-past came, a quarter to two struck, still no Frank. Diana, who had been

sitting with her bonnet on for the last twenty minutes, was almost in despair. She knew that in Miss Courtenay's eyes it was an unpardonable offence not to appear punctually at appointed hours. She had more than once looked out of the window which commanded a centre view of the square, with something of the anxiety of Bluebeard's sister-in-law. No signs of her brother.

"Aunt Alicia," said she, struck with a sudden thought, "Frank must have forgotten me, do you not think I might very safely walk home by myself, the streets are very quiet at this time of day."

"Could you not wait ten minutes more, my dear? The servants will have done dinner at two, and James can then go with you."

"If I wait ten minutes, Miss Courtenay will be at luncheon, and in the ten minutes it will take me to walk home, she will have worked herself up to a great state of

nervous alarm. I should not be afraid of walking by myself."

"I should not like you to do it. I had rather you went down to your uncle's room, and asked him to go with you."

Diana hesitated, and was walking slowly towards the door, when Lionel spoke—

"My father went out half an hour ago, but I am quite ready to accompany you." He spoke to his cousin, but looked at his mother.

"Thank you," said Di in a tone, which was meant to imply a negative to this proposal.

"Oh, that will do, unless you will stay to luncheon here." said Lady Stanford.

"My aunt has settled to drive down to Fulham this afternoon, and we are to start directly after luncheon, so I cannot stay, and yet—"

Diana did not quite know what she was going to say.



"I am going home, it will not be ten yards out of my way," remarked Lionel, who fancied she demurred on the score of putting him to inconvenience.

Lady Stanford stood greatly in awe of Miss Courtenay; she was always afraid she might give offence.

"I think it will be the best plan to go with Lionel, if you must be in Curzon Street by two."

There is a great deal in the habit of obedience, and though very reluctant Diana acquiesced.

"Thank you, Lionel," but this time it was an affirmative expression of gratitude.

That very day three years before, she had walked for an hour and more, along the gravel walk of the Rectory garden with Lionel, and found the time all too short; now with her arm linked once more in his, she was treading the pavement of a London street,

and wondering what she should say to break an awkward silence. So our lives vary.

She did not pity herself in the least; but the last two or three weeks of intercourse with her cousin had, she could hardly have said why, awakened that feeling towards Lionel.

Unconsciously she spoke in a gentler tone, than usual, and then added—

“So the baby is to be christened Alicia, after all?”

“Yes, poor little thing!” said he with a half sigh.

“It is much stronger, is it not?” answered she, fancying his sigh was for his child. “Harris, who went to see it yesterday, says that though it is small, it is quite as big as you were, at three weeks old.”

“It had better die at once, than live, like its father, to wish that it had never been born,” said Lionel, who was struggling against

recollections, which would again and again arise.

If one thought of self, if one longing, lingering feeling of regret for the past, had lurked in Di's mind, she had not found it so easy to jest upon his words. She thought this outburst nothing more than the passing effect of an access of his old low spirits.

"I hope it will be like your going to Eton ; do you remember saying you had rather die than go to school. Frank used to declare, that whatever you most desponded about, turned out the best." Her gentle words of raillery were very different from Florence's mocking tones.

"Times have changed," said he smiling, but still sadly.

"Not very much," returned she, "but now you have a daughter to educate and make happy, it behoves you to become wiser."

"I have learned wisdom by experience,"

returned he gravely; "such experience as I hope my poor little girl may never profit by."

"Ah!" said his cousin, "you will soon begin to talk like papa about the cares of a family. Goodbye, and many thanks for your escort," and without even guessing at the real sadness which his words betrayed, she ran lightly up the steps, where Gog was standing watching for her coming round the corner.

Lionel walked quickly home. His cousin was right, for his child's sake, if not for his own, was he called on to make an effort, and his step grew firmer with that resolve.

"Mrs. Gresham is in the drawing-room, and Mr. Frank is with her," said the servant who let him in. The man had been bred and born in Sutton village.

Lionel had his foot on the staircase, but something staid his step, and he turned into the little dark den of a back dining-room, which he made his sanctum. He sat down, and began restlessly to turn over the books

and papers which lay on the table, for he was somewhat literary after his own desultory fashion.

"Pshaw ! though he is there, I may as well go up. If I am resolved to take the first step towards a reconciliation, I must not shrink at the outset."

Upstairs accordingly he went, and there he found Florence reclining on the sofa, gracefully enveloped in a cashmere, and vastly become by a coquettish little lace cap and pink ribbons. A luncheon tray was on the table, and Frank was waiting on her, "fetching and carrying most amiably," as she informed her husband.

Frank's face did not altogether bear testimony to this character, for, as usual, it clouded over at the sight of Lionel. He took up his hat, and said—

"It is time for me to be going."

"Stay and have some luncheon yourself, Frank," said Lionel, cordially.

"Yes do," urged Florence; "it is my first

day down stairs, and I want somebody to amuse me."

"I have an appointment—I must be off without delay," was the not very gracious response.

"I took your sister home," said Lionel, rather formally; "she could not wait in Grosvenor Square any longer, so you need not hurry away."

This was Frank's forgotten appointment, but he did not choose to say so, or to stay; his sister might do as she pleased, *he* was not going to be friends with Lionel.

"Thank you," answered he, coldly, "I am sorry you had that trouble. Goodbye, Florence. Don't come down, Lionel."

It was, as she said, the first time Florence had appeared in the drawing-room, and Lionel, who had his full share of good resolves, and more than his share of repentance and remorse, for all that he did amiss, would have been glad to say something kind, but there is nothing so

difficult as to make advances in a case where there ought, by rights, to be perfect confidence, and no room for estrangement.

"I must not say I am sorry to see you down stairs," began he, "but I hoped you were going to wait till the evening, I have had so many alone."

It was in her want of sympathy that Florence failed most signally.

"I am sure I have been dull enough up stairs, sent to bed with the chickens; but you might always have dined at your Club, or in Grosvenor Square."

She did not in the least enter into the feeling which prompted his words.

"I have dined out so often that I shall be glad to be a little domestic."

"Don't talk of it," said she, with something of the manner which was so fascinating to strangers, but so chilling to her husband. "I am counting the days which must elapse before I am allowed to go anywhere. It is too pro-

voking to have lost so much of the best part of the season."

He moved away and sighed, and well he might, for his last chance of home-happiness was crumbling beneath his feet, slipping from his grasp, and leaving him on a desolate strand, without love and without hope.

"I have asked Frank to be godfather to Miss Alicia," remarked Florence, "you have so few relations, and the Dean may christen her if he likes—that will be compliment enough for him."

"Have you?" said he, absently.

"Yes; what are you thinking of, that you don't attend when I speak?"

His resolution was taken; he would make one last effort.

"Shall I tell you?" said he.

"Just as you please," answered she, indifferently.

"I was thinking how very far from happy we are, at any rate I have been, since we came



back to England." He was too considerate of her feelings to say, since I read that unfortunate letter.

"I do not complain," said she, coldly, "and I imagined you were content to let things take their course."

"Unless we could amend them."

"I can go back to mamma, if you have changed your mind again, and wish for a separation. I am quite well enough to travel now," returned Florence, in her most defiant manner.

Lord Stanford had made such a settlement on her as he thought his son's wife entitled to, and she was worldly and wicked enough at this moment to remember this fact with satisfaction.

"I did not mean that—you know I did not. A separation was the very thing farthest from my thoughts," was all that Lionel could bring himself to say.

"What did you want, then?" asked she,

preserving her hard manner ; though even she was a little softened.

“ I wish to imply that I would fain love my wife, if she would let me. I had resolved on telling you I was ready to forget all our past differences — to consign them for ever to oblivion, if you would do the same. That it would be for my happiness, I hoped it would be for yours also, if henceforth we were one in affection, as we are in name. If we began our wedded life on false premises, we have both suffered for it. We have a new tie between us now. Florence will you not let our child be the bond to knit us once more together ? ”

He paused for a reply ; but none came. Vanity, and the love of admiration, were the dominant feelings in Florence’s heart. Lionel had appealed to neither. If he had told her, in hackneyed phrase, that he could not live without her love—that her coldness was death to him, she would have been better pleased. As it was, she took his sincerity for indifference,

and misconstrued the straightforward, manly tone of his appeal, into a proof of his coldness towards herself. The softened tones of his voice fell unheeded on her ear; she would not meet the pleading look which shone in his dark, melancholy eyes.

“Is that all?” said she, contemptuously.

The whole fire of his nature was aroused; and in low, tremulous tones, which sounded like the distant mutterings of the coming storm, he spoke again—

“Even this very hour, I would have laid at your feet all the heart I have left to offer. You do well to scorn it, it is not worth much; but, till this moment, I believed you woman enough to be capable of some softer feelings! I thought even you must know what it is to thirst for affection, to long and pine for one fond caress, one tender word. I thought it my fault that we were severed. I thought if I told you I would love you—love you from henceforth—love you for ever—but why speak of it; you

know not the feeling—how could I expect it? The cursed daughter of an accursed woman!" and, almost beside himself with fury, he dashed out of the room.

"Lionel, Lionel, come back!"

His eager, passionate vehemence did take a sort of effect upon her. He heeded her not; he heard her not. He was out of the house, and rushing on like a maniac, before she had recovered from her astonishment.

Florence was a little affected, a great deal flattered, and not very much surprised.

"Poor Lionel!" said she to herself; "I will make it up with him one of these days, but it will not do to be in a hurry about it; I shall wait till he says he is sorry for speaking in that way of me; besides, he has no business to abuse mamma."

Then she wondered whether he had meant he had liked anybody before he had met her. Who it was, she should like to know. It was always as well to be acquainted with a man's

weak point. It was so easy to manage them, if you had anything to reproach them with.

Altogether, though she had no more visitors, she passed a very exciting afternoon in company with her own thoughts. She was doubting whether she would stay down stairs, and pass the evening with Lionel, or whether she should pretend to be tired, and go up to her own room, and ultimately decided that would be best; one scene was enough in one day. It would not do to relent in a hurry; he had been the first to quarrel at Baden, she would be the last to make it up now.

Florence's character had not improved during the last six months; it had, on the contrary, deteriorated rapidly. And it may be remarked that this is generally the effect of any great deviation from the acknowledged path of duty. If any human being once allows themselves, knowingly, to persist in wrong doing, they may be very sure that their whole moral being suffers from it; we think it is but a little

sin, we do not know how far, and how wide, the canker spreads its influence.

At one epoch, Florence would have graciously received such an advance as that which he had made on this day. At that time, Florence was spending days, weeks, and months in the society of Lady Stanford. We read that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," and coldly assent to it as truth; but how few people are aware of the effect their own consistency of conduct exercises over others. Lady Stanford sighed that she had so little power to fulfil Lionel's hope of her gaining an influence over Florence. She did not know that, though her daughter-in-law rejected her counsel, and would none of her advice, that she was the person in the world she most respected and looked up to. There had been moments at Sutton Priors, when Florence was well-nigh ready to acknowledge to herself—to no one else—that she was in the wrong; she experienced twinges of conscience, which she had

not felt since the comparatively innocent days of her childhood. How strenuously she fought against them ; how steadfastly she beat them down, the increased petulance and waywardness which marked her conduct to Lionel, testified.

They came to London early in February ; and, from that time, all better thoughts, all happier influences, had been laid aside. The world, its frivolities, its pleasures, its amusements, were all Florence cared for ; and living in them, and for self exclusively, her heart had daily hardened, till it was as cold as iron—as repellant as steel. A married woman, who lays herself out for admiration, has no difficulty in finding admirers ; and men, who would not have given Florence a thought as Miss Russell, found it both safe, creditable, and pleasant to flirt with Mrs. Gresham. Her vanity grew in proportion as it was fed. The down hill road is a very easy, and a very smooth one, and Florence had neither principle, affection, or one tender reminiscence of the past

to keep her back. Destitute of one good motive herself to serve as a guide in forming her judgment of others, before many hours had passed, Florence convinced herself that now Lionel saw how others regarded and admired her, he could reason of love himself; every kindlier emotion disappeared as this conviction gained ground, and, alongside of it, grew up a burning desire to revenge on him all the self-degradation, and self-contempt, long rankling within her heart—the bitter results of her own unworthy line of conduct, in the first instance.

It was with more curiosity than anxiety that she listened for her husband's rap. She was just beginning to get a little frightened, and to have a few horrible thoughts about his making away with himself, when she heard him come in. He did not even go into the drawing-room, to see if she were there, but went straight up to his own room.

“He is sulky,” thought she; “then he may come round by himself.”



Florence hated her nurse ; partly because she kept her in order, and would not let her be either imprudent or wilful, partly because she was always praising Mr. Gresham, to whom she had taken a great fancy, and mostly because she insisted on her daily seeing her child.

Mrs. Green was an important person in her way ; she was made much of by so many fine ladies that she did not mind offending one ; and, on several occasions, she had told Mrs. Gresham her mind pretty plainly. She put the climax to her iniquities in Florence's eyes, when, half-an-hour later, Lionel was heard descending the stairs, by opening the door for him, and informing him—

“ Mrs. Gresham was in her room again.”

Lionel was very pale ; but there was a stern, fixed look in his face, Florence had never seen there before. He came in and waited, as if he expected her to speak.

The small remains of womanly instinct not yet quite extinct in her bosom, bade her ad-

dress him gently, told her he was so generous and kind, that, though hurt and angry now, he would take the least expression of regret, as an ample apology for the past. But her relentless temper had the entire sway over her, she fancied he would imagine she had told Mrs. Green to stop him, he should see his mistake.

"So you are going to dine out after all, in preference to practising domesticity," said she, in her most provoking manner.

"I have just received a message from my father, asking me to go up to Grosvenor Square."

He spoke in the cold, calm tones, which he had been used to fall back upon before, but which she had not heard since her illness.

She turned white with suppressed anger; perhaps, he mistook the cause of her emotion, for his manner changed instantly.

"I have not sent an answer—I need not go, if you wish me to stay at home."

"I am going to bed, and to rest," said she, as if his movements were nothing to her.

By this sort of treatment she had gained the mastery over her mother's violent temper, and she foolishly fancied she could do the same with her husband.

"Good night, then;" and as he came up to her, and bent down, so that she only could hear his words, he whispered—"I am sorry I was violent this morning. Believe me, I regretted it the moment the words were out of my mouth."

Any other woman would have flung her arms round his neck, and on his heart have confessed that she did, that she must love him. Florence wanted to force him to say that he loved her, whether she loved him or not. She would have died rather than have made the least concession.

She turned her head aside, lest he should proffer the simple token of affection, which had not been hers for months, save on the

day that her child was born, and obstinate and resentful to the last, simply said—

“Go.”

As he moved slowly towards the door, Mrs. Green, who had been carrying the baby up and down the room, and, during the process of putting it to sleep, was making herself agreeable to it, by talking nonsense, after the most approved fashion of her class, came up.

“She’s not asleep, sir,” said she, uncovering its face, jealous for the honor of her nursing, whom, to her great wrath, nobody seemed to care for.

Lionel had the kindest heart in the world; even in the midst of his own distress, he would not hurt the woman’s feelings by not noticing her charge. It was a pretty baby; and from its very delicacy, white, waxen, and fair as any doll. He looked at it earnestly, for a moment, and was doubting about kissing it, it appeared so fragile, when it clasped its little hand tightly round his finger.

"Nobody cares for you, my pretty, because you are not a boy—not even mamma," said Mrs. Green, at the same moment, addressing the unconscious infant.

She was almost frightened by the eager way he took and kissed the child. In very truth, he half fancied there was a sort of appeal in this little, natural, babyish action, an appeal which he mentally vowed should never be disregarded so long as he lived. Poor child! with such a mother, it was almost as desolate, lonely, and unloved as himself.

From that time forward, if she marvelled that such a gentleman should never come again to enquire after his wife, for Florence vainly tried the effect of secluding herself in her own room, Mrs. Green had no cause to complain of his neglecting the child.

"No," said she, to Harris, the day before she quitted her charge, for Harris, as Lady Stanford's delegate, was a constant visitor to the nursery—"no, Mrs. Gresham doesn't care

a straw for the baby ; she'd never even ask to see it, if I did not take it down ; but Mr. Gresham, he's very choice over it, he comes into the nursery twice every day, sometimes three times, to enquire ' how it's getting on.' He's more than half afraid of touching the little dear ; but when she can walk and talk ; and, bless you, Mrs. Harris ! he seems to expect she may be setting about it any day ; I know who will be her papa's darling, if she's not ' her mother's joy,' " concluded the good old woman, addressing the babe, and quoting from the pin-cushion which lay in front of her, as she was progressing with that very small young lady's toilet.

## CHAPTER V.

And if she mingled with the festive train,  
It was but as some solitary star  
Beholds the dance of shepherds on the plain,  
In its bright stillness present, tho' afar.  
Yet would she smile—and that too hath its smile,  
Circled with joy which reached her not the while ;  
And bearing a lone spirit not at war  
With earthly things, but o'er their form and hue  
Shedding too clear a light, too sorrowfully true.

MRS. HEMANS.

FRANK could quite have found it in his heart to find fault with his sister, for having accepted the smallest service at the hands of Lionel. He was angry with himself for having forgotten her, and furious with his cousin for having supplied his place. The more so, per-

haps, that he was well aware that he often rendered services to Florence, which she should have exacted from none but her husband. He went straight to Curzon Street, and not finding Diana in the drawing-room, vented his wrath upon his aunt.

With all her quips and cranks, Miss Courtenay was a very shrewd old lady, and quite as well versed in the ways of the world, as was her nephew ; better, perhaps, seeing she had lived three score years in it, and he not much more than one.

“The less said about it the better—it would only harrow up your sister’s feelings. There is no need to put any such notions in Di’s head. ‘To the pure all things are pure.’ You’re a Dean’s son, and ought to know your Bible, Master Frank.”

“Of course, Di did not see any harm in it ; but suppose she had met anybody ; it was quite enough to make the world talk.”

“If you’re so much afraid of that, I wonder



you don't listen to what the world says about yourself. A pretty tale it would be if it crept out, that you were the first person to welcome your cousin's wife down-stairs again."

Miss Courtenay was great, when carrying the war into the enemy's country.

Frank put on a supercilious air, and said he had only called at the door, his going in was quite a chance; but, of course, his aunt could distort the fact if she chose.

"There is no use playing off airs upon me, Frank, who have known you ever since you were in petticoats, and before too. If you were anybody else, but your father's son, I should say, make love to Mrs. Gresham and welcome, and the sooner you run off with her, and show her in her true colours, the better."

"You have no right to suppose that either I or Mrs. Gresham ever dreamed of such a thing," cried he, vainly trying to keep his temper.

"I should hope not; if you began to dream

of it, you would go on to talk of it, and everybody knows what follows. I only warn you what this sort of thing comes to. I don't expect you to own you are in the wrong—what man ever did? But nobody was ever yet the worse for hearing what other people thought of their conduct. There are two ways of looking at everything, Frank."

"I quite acknowledge it; and should be very glad if you did not view my conduct through a distorted medium."

"Distorted fiddlestick!" retorted Miss Courtenay, who prided herself upon having no fear of any man. Why should she? What did she owe to them? she would ask. Even the old man who left her his money would, she always declared, have cut her off with a sixpence, if he could have carried his possessions with him into the other world. "But, I do say, it is very bad taste, if nothing worse, on your part, to be parading your admiration for the woman who has supplanted your own sister.

Di may take your part, if she pleases ; but she does not like it any the better for that, I can see. But that's just the difference between men and women ; you came here finding fault with her, and she flies in a passion if I say so much as a word against you."

Frank could have found it in his heart to laugh at the notion of his sweet tempered sister in a passion. He was quite aware who lost their temper on these sort of occasions ; but though he was amused, he was not the less grateful.

"I am sure nobody is fonder of Diana, or admires her more than I do," answered he ; "but I hate that fellow Lionel."

"So do I," said Miss Courtenay heartily, "I dare say your father would think it quite wicked of us, and Di is more like him than you are, Frank. However, we were not talking of that, or making comparisons between you and your sister. All I want, only you always give such a vexatious turn to whatever subject any-

body differs from you on——” this was a side out, *par parenthèse*, “all I want is to put you on your guard. I don’t wish to argue,” added she, seeing that Frank was about to speak; “but mark my words, a day will come when, if you are the man I take you for, you will bitterly repent this folly, to call it by no harsher name. I only hope it is not very far off.”

And with this charitable wish, she concluded, and before Frank had time to reply, his sister came into the room, and Miss Courtenay, who was a great stickler for all the old school courtesies, bade her nephew hand Diana to the carriage, she herself always conversed with Gog and Magog all the way down stairs, and through the hall, and hardly finished before the carriage drove off.

A greater contrast than that which existed between Florence and Diana, in manner as in disposition, could not well be imagined. They were not more dissimilar in appearance, than

they were at heart. The only wonder was that Frank did not perceive it. Many things combined to warp his judgment; it was a great object with Florence to stand well with him, and she flattered him, asked his advice, and deferred, to his opinion, in a way which would have turned a much older and wiser head, still less a young man's of barely two-and-twenty, and one too whose great fault was self-reliance, whose strongest weakness was the desire to lead. By inuendoes, rather than by words, by hints, rather than complaints, by expressive silence, more than by open accusations against her husband, or her husband's family, Florence had by insensible degrees, brought him to think of her as an injured woman. And every word he heard against her—Miss Courtenay's open attacks, and Lord Stanford's covert sneers, only confirmed him in this opinion, and enlisted all his sense of chivalry on her side. Besides that his sister's very consistency of conduct made him

the more ready to believe that other women's principles kept pace with their professions.

The suffrages of the world, whatever others might think and feel, were all on Mrs. Gresham's side. If her own brother could not, it was not marvellous that casual observers did not perceive the difference between Diana's quick heart and Florence's soft, gentle manners. Mrs. Gresham strove to attract and to please every one, save where such an effort was a duty; that she scoffed at. Our heroine, on the contrary, was completely indifferent to the effect her manner, or words might produce in society—we do not say this was right—but it resulted from an exclusive affection, which, twining itself round its home and household deities, excluded and denied all other outward claims.

The Miss Gresham, consequently, who went into society was, to all appearance, a very different person from her, who, at home, bore so patiently all Miss Courtenay's whims and

fancies, and with whose daily visit to her suffering relative, neither pleasure nor the lassitude consequent on late hours, were ever allowed to interfere. Like many other people, in subduing her heart, Diana Gresham had lost much of that softness of manner, which those who do not look beyond the surface, are apt to consider the outward and visible sign of innumerable gentle and womanly qualities, and which indubitably is most attractive. The young, the happy, those who have no quarrel with a cold, hard world, with whom, in fact, as the phrase is, "the world goes well," have, it may be observed, and speaking generally, a confidence in others, and a suavity of demeanour, which, in the critical estimation of society, are so many evidences in their favour. Those, on the contrary, to whom life is "a battle," or who, at the outset of their career, are by circumstances thrown back upon themselves, rarely retain, unless they are perfectly callous, a gentle, or a winning manner and address. They

are at war with destiny, or outraged in feeling.

Such was the case with our heroine. The very profundity of her emotions, the very earnestness of her nature, and depths of her sentiments, so little comprehended by people in general, had led to its usual and inevitable results. She entrenched herself within an icy barrier of reserve, and only learnt to despise the outer world the more, when she saw the petty motives by which its votaries are actuated. It might have been the fault of the peculiar class among whom she moved, but the real truth was, none of those she met came up to Diana Gresham's pre-conceived ideas. In her imaginary world she had expected to find beings with refined and cultivated minds, high intellectual abilities and moral aims. Such were her crude notions of the great and grand.

It was a dreadful downfall to discover that the refinement and cultivation were for the



most part external, the aim of the majority pleasure, and the intellect of the few swamped and drowned in the current setting in the same direction. She had been prepared to find the tone of conversation much more elevated, and the topics discussed of more general interest than in the dull routine of country society. It was no such thing. In London, they certainly talked more of eating and drinking, and less of their immediate neighbours, than in the country ; but a good story told at the expense of any absent friend, was very highly esteemed, and the marriages of some of their acquaintance, and the deaths or difficulties of the remainder, awakened just as much interest in good society —only they were sooner forgotten thanks to the multiplicity of such events—as among the desolate spinsters, and portly prebend's wives in the Cathedral town of C——, whom she had always thought so puerile and so weak.

Racing and race-horses were the only topic which she had never heard discussed before—

rural opinion being generally strong in reprobation of the evils to which these tend. She heard enough about it now ; but long before the result of the Derby had been talked threadbare, she had ceased to wonder, that Lord Stanford had put down the stud of race-horses maintained by his predecessor ; for many long years a subject of much regret to Frank, Lionel, and herself. She only marvelled that men who stood so high in the world's annals, as do some of the most frequently quoted supporters of the turf, and who in future ages of the world will be characters for history, could lend themselves, their influence, and their talents to the maintenance of a sport, which brings the blackleg and the gentleman to almost the same level, giving them one common interest, and to whose debasing tendencies the mad excitement, the wild joy, the abject despair, and all the fearful passions brought to light on a race-course, testify loudly enough.

Older and wiser people than our heroine, have

found it difficult to reconcile the frivolous game of life's outside show, with the terrible earnest of its inward abysses; she could not comprehend the world, and the little circle in which she moved did not understand her.

Meanwhile, Frank and Miss Courtenay were rather distressed because our heroine was not more sought after. They knew that she was handsome, and particularly distinguished-looking; and so a great many other people thought, for some one or other was perpetually inquiring in their hearing who she was, and some of the more adventurous sometimes asked to be introduced to her. They might have spared themselves the trouble—nothing could induce Diana to waltz—she looked upon the polka with horror, and her balls, with the exception of one or two quadrilles, were generally passed at her aunt's side.

Frank said, rather fretfully, one day—

“That if Di chose to talk, instead of sitting as silent as an idiot, she would beat half the

girls in London into fits;" but this desirable contingency did not seem of very probable fulfilment, and poor Miss Courtenay, who before her niece came to London, had looked through the peerage, and decided that Diana must be content with a marquis or an earl, as marriageable dukes were scarce, would now have been very glad of a viscount, or indeed of a baron, provided this imaginary suitor were of older descent than Lord Stanford; he being the Mordecai who had sat at her gate for many a long year. It was the dearest wish of her heart that her niece should make a marriage, by the side of which the recusant Lionel might be looked down on as a bad match, and to own the truth, Frank himself was not very much wiser.

It was all very well talking and planning. Men see very quickly where their attentions are likely to make an impression, and where not, and the only people who really knew Diana as she was, or esteemed her as she

deserved, were the few old men who chanced to make her acquaintance. To them she was natural, unreserved, and like herself; she could talk to them as she did to her father, for they treated her as if she were a rational being, and if they did, sometimes, take the privilege of their age, and express a little open admiration, they did not do it in a manner which wounded her self-respect, or instantly oblige her to be on her guard. And it was a little amelioration to Miss Courtenay's disappointment, to hear from some of her own contemporaries and whilome admirers, how clever, how superior, how charming, and what she thought still more of, how graceful and attractive they thought her niece.

Old Sir Gilbert Edmonstone was one of Miss Gresham's greatest admirers. He had been at Westminster with her father, and when he had gone to Christchurch, to prepare for the church, Mr. Edmonstone had entered the army, and while the Dean and his brother had been

battling with poverty, he had fought his way into the notice of Sir Arthur Wellesley in India, and earned his honors under the same great commander in the Peninsular war. He had become a noted warrior, and a rising statesman, before the wheel of fortune had given either of his cotemporaries a lift, but they were more to be envied than he was, in one respect, for he had married a woman who had no taste for domestic peace, and who was as eager to be foremost in fashion, as he had been in the fray.

Lady Emily Edmonstone, the daughter of a marquis, "with a lang pedigree," was one of the few who think it derogatory to their own dignity to associate with any but those of their own degree. Sir Gilbert's friends were by no means always her friends; she had known Miss Courtenay by sight for years—they lived next door—and what was more to the purpose, they had a good many acquaintance in common; and when Sir Gilbert, who had often been at Sutton Priors, one day at a dinner party recog-

nised Diana as the daughter of his old friend, and led her up to introduce her to Lady Emily, she did not, as was her wont, cut her on their next meeting, seeing she was Lord Stanford's niece, but she left cards the following day on Miss Courtenay and Miss Gresham, and ultimately, at Sir Gilbert's suggestion—not that he was always master in his own house—asked them to dinner.

Diana had often wondered how a man, with Sir Gilbert Edmonstone's talents, had been deluded into marrying such a weak, silly, frivolous woman as Lady Emily, for the once fair face was rouged and wrinkled now, and when on the day she dined with her aunt at his house, he came up and asked whether he might introduce a nephew of his wife's, our heroine did not feel as if it would be the treat he evidently thought it must be. Though her answer was gracious enough, it may be presumed that the keen-eyed old soldier perceived that Miss Gresham was not prepared to be pleased, for he took a chair by her.

"Basil Mohun is a native of your own county, and almost as enthusiastic about —— as you are. His father and mother both died before you can remember, but I think you may have heard the Dean speak of the Mohuns?"

Diana tried hard, but she could not recollect.

"By the way, if I am not mistaken, your uncle has got an estate, a couple of farms, and an old house on Furley Downs, hard by the poor remains of this boy's property."

"Yes, yes," said Diana, who was suddenly enlightened. "In the direction we call 'below the hill;' I have never been there, the roads are so bad, but I have heard Uncle Stanford lament over the decay of Furley Grange, and I thought no one lived there."

"You are quite right; no one lives there now; whenever Basil comes to England, he goes down there for a month or two, and inhabits one corner of the house. However, he cannot keep up the place, the estate is so heavily



mortgaged ; I only wonder he has not sold it long ago—he would be much better off if he did.”

“Mr. Mohun is in the army ?” remarked Diana, interrogatively.

“No, not he—a sad pity—but he could not fancy following the fife and drum in piping times of peace. War, or no war, however, I could have pushed him on in the army, but he would not listen to me ; these clever lads will have their own way, and he must needs be a diplomatist ; and it is so long since any of my friends have been in office, that I have not been able to do much for him. Ah ! there’s the dinner coming—where is he ?”

Diana looked round the room, expecting to see a beardless youth somewhere, but before she had made up her mind which of the black-coated, white-neckclothed exquisites, who were clustered like bees between the folding doors, was Lady Emily’s nephew, Sir Gilbert brought up an individual, who was certainly not a boy, for his dark hair was streaked with grey,

and though this, with his sun-burnt complexion, made him, at first sight, look older than he really was, the gentleman presented to her could hardly be less than eight or nine and twenty.

"Here's my nephew, you must make some allowances for him, Miss Gresham, for he's been in the East the last six years, and tells me has not seen an unveiled face all that time, and that he doesn't know how to talk to ladies."

A shy man would have been driven to despair by this style of introduction; not so Mr. Mohun; he was far too composed in his manner and bearing to be put out by such a trifle.

"Consequently I think every woman I see an angel!" said he, offering his arm, as the four-and-twenty guests began to file off towards the dining-room.

"You will soon find out your mistake; most people's divinities turn out very earthly on a nearer acquaintance."

"I have just come from a country where women are not even supposed to have any souls," remarked Basil.

"That is running into the opposite extreme; for in that respect, at any rate, men and women are equal," returned Miss Gresham.

"And in no other?" asked he.

"Tennyson's 'Princess Ida,' is a good example to those among us who would essay to make themselves man's equal in power of intellect," answered she.

"That is one of the finest conceptions of the present Poet Laureate," said he. "The awakened woman's heart, with all its pride and sternness, gradually melting at the sight of her rejected lover's bodily suffering, and the prospect of his death. And yet, after all, it is but an old story in a new dress."

"The beauty lies in the telling of the tale," said Di.

"Did you ever think the prince was worthy of his bride?" asked he.

"An autobiography causes the speaker, perhaps, to appear sententious, but he was certainly a very model of constancy and perseverance."

"Are those qualities you particularly admire?"

"Yes, in theory; but we rarely meet with them in real life," said she; replying to her own train of thoughts quite as much as to his words.

Basil looked at her in some surprise.

"I did not think you would have been so harsh in your judgment of us; but, perhaps, as I perceive you are by no means prejudiced in favour of your own sex, you extend this charge to them also?"

"I did not mean to be harsh," said Diana, in her own defence.

"That is not an answer to my question," returned he, with a smile. "Tell me, is it men or women, or both, that you accuse of inconstancy?"

"I think men are more prone to change than women, though the reverse is said to be the case," replied she, after a moment's thought; "and yet, in right of their character and intellect, they should be the most consistent."

Basil Mohun wondered whether she were speaking out of the depths of her own heart; or whether these were but the vague and dreamy theories of a clever, but young and inexperienced mind.

"You think, then, that consistency of sentiment, and of principle, ought to accompany superior powers of intellect?"

"I think that it ought; but I do not see that it does," was her quick reply. "I used to imagine that people felt in proportion to the force of their characters, but I am gradually arriving at the conclusion that few feel at all."

"It is difficult to decide on how much the world around us really feel; when, by education, as well as by natural instinct, every one strives to hide that which lays nearest to his

heart. Even a savage scorns to parade his emotions, still more a civilised being."

"Yes," said Di, doubtfully.

"That 'yes' sounds as if you admitted the fact, but doubted the truth of the hypothesis," returned Basil.

"No ; I believe you are right," said Miss Gresham ; who had an innate conviction that a good many people thought her cold, reserved and disagreeable ; " but I should like to know how you excuse all the profession and parade of feeling which means nothing."

"I do not excuse it ; I think the great fault of the age we live in, is its want of truth."

She would have liked to have continued the conversation, but Sir Gilbert Edmonstone asked his nephew some question about Persia ; and, though she would have preferred listening to his answer, her other neighbour thought it his duty to make the agreeable to her, and talked to her of balls and parties, till she almost lost all patience with him and his vapid conversa-

tion. There was a smile on Basil Mohun's face, as he gave ear to her somewhat curt answers. She was truthful, at any rate, for try as he would, her tormentor could not induce her to say she found the parties pleasant, as he apparently made a conscience of doing, in proportion to their ratio of fashion. At last a whole series of yes and no replies, ended in a cessation of hostilities.

Basil was not without a hope Miss Gresham would turn round and talk to him. He might have waited till doomsday ; it was not Diana's way to speak first, unless she were at home, or very powerfully moved by compassion. She leant back in her chair, and began listening to the general conversation, but he did not leave her long in the enjoyment of this occupation. She would not have objected if he had proceeded to descant on the world's want of truth ; it would rather have chimed in with the antagonistic frame of mind, which our heroine was too apt to carry into society ; but Basil was no pedantic

proser, and he had lived long enough in the world—if she had not—to discover that it is only by going out of the narrow circle of common life, and individual interests, that the heart becomes enlarged, the affections generous, and the imagination exalted. Mr. Mohun and the Dean, if they had compared notes on the subject, would have found their opinions very much the same on this, as on many other topics.



## CHAPTER VI.

That fete to which the cull, the flower  
Of England's beauty, rank and power,  
From the young spinster just come out,  
To the old Premier too long in—  
From legs of far-descended gout,  
To the last new monstachion'd chin—  
All were convoked by Fashion's spells  
    To the small circle where she dwells,  
    Collecting nightly to allure us,  
    Live atoms, which together hurled,  
    She, like another Epicurus,  
    Sets dancing thus, and calls the world.

MOORE.

THE first summer weather was come; and,  
though June was rather early in the season for  
a *fête champêtre*, yet all the world, and his

wife—or rather the small section of society, which dubs itself “the world,”—tempted thereby, were keeping high holiday at the villa of one of its tutelar deities, a little way out of town. Strawberries and iced cream, a small garden—as radiant with flowers, as only a garden in the suburbs of the metropolis ever is, prior to the dog-days—the band of Frank Gresham’s regiment, and a paddock where haymaking was going on, were the simple adjuncts, by help of which two or three hundred people were enjoying themselves excessively—and our heroine among the number. The odour of the flowers, the sweet scent of the hay, the air, the sky, the freshness of the atmosphere, as compared with close, hot, dusty London, were all so consonant with Diana Gresham’s tastes, that she was quite happy in herself, and at peace with all mankind; and when Lady Emily Edmonstone, and her two plain daughters, swept by, with Mr. Mohun in their train, she

had a bow and smile for the whole party. If Basil had been struck by her appearance the night before, in full evening costume, he thought her infinitely prettier now, in her white muslin dress, made high up to the throat, the harmonious outline of her form only broken by a black Spanish lace mantilla; her straw bonnet, the very *acmé* of lightness and simplicity, and the only particle of colour about her a long green sash, which encircled a perfectly rounded waist. The Miss Edmonstones would not have been flattered, if they had heard their cousin mentally compare the garlands of lilies and roses, which encircled their faces, and travelled all round their head-pieces, with the brilliant tints of Miss Gresham's complexion, which had nothing to set it off, but her soft, waving, braided hair, whose length and beauty her bonnet could not entirely conceal, for a broad plait came round her head like a coronet.

If Diana did not take pleasure in excitement,

and delight in dancing, flirting, and nonsense, she was saved a good deal of heart-burning and jealousy. The result, as regarded enjoyment, was very much the same in the end, if indeed the balance was not altogether on her side, for she found a good deal of amusement in watching other people. Miss Courtenay had got on India-rubber galoshes, and was sitting on a bench with two dowagers of her acquaintance ; and, as it had not rained for a week, she was graciously pleased to allow Diana to place herself on a haycock by Frank, more particularly as Lady Bingley — her dearest friend and oracle—permitted her grand-daughter to do the same.

Miss Bingley was a nice innocent little girl, but just come out ; one who loved dancing for dancing's sake, and enjoyed herself more like a child, and less like a butterfly, than most of our heroines' acquaintance. During Florence's temporary absence from the scene of action, Frank had paid her a good deal of attention,

wherewith Ethel Bingley was much delighted, and perhaps it was her unreserved praises of her brother which had made Diana first take a fancy to her, for Miss Bingley was not particularly wise. At any rate, the three were great friends, in the common place acceptance of the term friendship. Frank, meanwhile, treated the young lady in a very *laissez aller* style, which Diana, being his sister, and sharing in it, did not feel as derogatory. How she would have liked any one of Miss Bingley's nine brothers to have treated her so, had not yet become a matter for consideration.

"Who did that fellow take off his hat to?" asked Frank, as Mr. Mohun went by.

"Not to me," said Ethel, eagerly.

Diana explained that she knew him.

"Oh, he's Sir Gilbert's nephew, is he?" remarked Frank, loftily. "Well, the Edmonstone's were nobodies, till the old man made a name for his family."

"He is not an Edmonstone, but a nephew

of Lady Emily's," returned his sister. "He is a Mr. Mohun, and, Furley Grange—don't you know Frank?—belongs to him."

"I've heard of the fellow," said her brother, "but I never saw him before."

Diana related what Sir Gilbert had told her of his nephew.

"How nice," said Ethel, "to live in a tumble down old house; I thought he was very interesting looking."

Frank, who was leaning on his elbow, turned round, and peeped under her parasol.

"So that is your idea of an interesting man," remarked he, with an amused smile. "I don't doubt you think he dines daily with the ghosts of his ancestors, and reads all night long, in a desolate library, with the light of a lamp falling on a pale, high forehead, they looking over his shoulder meanwhile."

Diana laughed, but Miss Bingley said—

"Oh, Mr. Gresham, you don't really think so?"

"Yes, I do," answered he, gravely.

"How very dreadful!" and she stretched her neck to look after Mr. Mohun, who was disappearing in the distance.

"Yes," proceeded he, "but it is not fair Mr. Mohun should excite all the interest. Don't you feel any compassion for poor Frank Gresham, who for three months, last winter, lived in the Tower, the most favorite locality for spirits, in the universe."

"Spirits!" said she, in horror. "Did you ever see any?"

"Yes, quantities," was his unhesitating response.

"Upon your honour? but I can't quite believe you," said she, doubtfully.

"Upon my honour," said Frank, drawing a grave face.

"What are they like? Were not you frightened?"

"It would not become a man, who fights for his Queen and his country, to own himself a

coward," replied he, quite ready to laugh at his own foolish joke, but determined to keep up her mystification, "but I have trembled to see other men make free with them."

Miss Bingley's eyes were rivetted on his face.

"Tell me," asked she, breathless with interest, "what were they like?"

He would soon have made her believe that he had seen the ghosts of the little Princes, Lady Jane Grey, and Lord Dudley into the bargain, with whom her infantine readings of history had brought her acquainted, if Di had not told her to ask whether the spirits were always unadulterated, and whether they did not generally appear in a cloud of tobacco smoke?"

Then at last she took in the joke, and was the first to laugh at her own folly in being so long deceived.

"Spirits!" said she, "of course I knew you must be jesting. How killing!"



This last was one of Miss Bingley's favorite expletives.

" 'Killing, who is killing?' " asked Frank.  
" Am I ? I'm quite flattered."

" How ridiculous you are, Mr. Gresham."

Mr. Gresham was not at all abashed. He only came a little nearer to her.

" Thank you," said he, with a low bow.  
" There's no mistake about my being ridiculous, I duly appreciate the compliment you intend to convey ; but I must be set right about this 'killing.' "

She would not answer.

" What part of speech is 'killing?' " persisted he.

" I am sure I don't know," said Ethel, good humouredly. " I never could understand Lindley Murray."

" That's honest, at all events," said Frank, " but I should like to know what 'killing,' means. " I've an idea it is a mild way ladies have of swearing."

"Oh! Mr. Gresham, I am sure it is not, I would not do anything so wicked for the world."

"Tell me what it means then."

"I can't, I don't know; I dare say it is very silly of me, grandmamma says it is."

This naïve admission amused Mr. Frank.

"If I were your respected grandmother, I should make you pay a fine every time 'killing' passed your lips."

"I shall never say it again, so you are quite welcome to fine me yourself, if you can convict me," said Ethel, merrily.

"Is that a bargain? may I inflict what penalty I choose?" asked Frank, impudently.

Ethel, who was pulling the hay out of the fringe of her parasol, did not catch his meaning.

"For shame, Frank," said Di, "you are too bad. Take care, Ethel, he will prove as treacherous as the wolf, who took the grand-

mamma's place in 'Little Red Riding Hood.'" added she, turning to Miss Bingley.

"I am not afraid to trust him," returned Ethel, innocently.

"You need not be," said Frank, gravely, and replying to his sister's questioning look, "I should be ashamed to betray any woman's confidence."

At this juncture, Mr. Mohun, who had been hovering about in the vicinity, in hopes of an encouraging glance from Miss Gresham, in despair of getting it, came up and spoke to her. Diana had great difficulty in keeping her countenance, for all the time they were exchanging common place remarks, she heard Frank worrying his little friend on the score of her new ally's 'interesting looks.' She was quite glad when she heard Ethel exclaim—

"What a pretty waltz."

"And you think it a sin not to be dancing," retorted Frank, good humouredly.

"Yes, I do," said she, with a little positive air.

"In the course of your education, did you ever hear anything of the properties of quicksilver," enquired Frank, raising himself, with an effort from his nearly recumbent position.

"I never had any regular education," answered she with a half sigh.

"Don't sigh over it, I do not know that you are not happier without it; if every body in the same predicament were to enjoy existence as much you do, it would be a very desirable omission."

She looked wistfully up into his face, she did not quite understand him.

"Shall we have a waltz then?" said he, holding out his arm.

She understood that fast enough, and sprang up gleefully.

Just as they turned away, Frank looked over his shoulder.

"There is some dancing there, on the lawn, we shall be back presently, Di."

And so saying, he walked off. Miss Courtenay was sitting within a yard or two, but this was his apology for deserting her.

Mr. Mohun looked after him.

"I am almost ashamed to own it," said he, "but I have been so long banished from polite society, that I cannot dance the polka, and the *deux temps* puzzles me completely."

"You have no great loss," was Di's quiet answer.

"What ! you a young lady, and not think dancing essential ?" exclaimed he, in astonishment.

"I never waltz, or dance the Polka myself; that is why I do not pity you," replied she.

He had been looking rather longingly at the vacant place beside her, on the hay, which Frank had abandoned.

"Then," said he, enquiringly, "I might sit

down without committing the crime which my cousins impute to me, of keeping dancing partners at a distance."

One of Di's rare smiles gave him the permission he waited for.

"Perhaps I ought not, on so short an acquaintance, to ask the question," said he, after a pause, "but do you think it wrong to dance?"

"No," said she, "I do not, and what is more, I think that it is now an almost obsolete prejudice."

"It is from preference then, not upon principle, that you sit still. Do you really dislike the act of dancing?" persisted he.

"I do not care about it," answered she, frankly, "and till this year I have never been in the way of much dancing, but, long ago, I made up my mind I would only dance quadrilles."

Just before Lionel left England, there had been a ball in the neighbourhood of Sutton, to which

they had all gone. There he had casually told Di, that he should not like his wife to dance. He went away before a month had passed, but his cousin remembered his words, and acted upon them. She told no one her reason, but her resolution was taken. Frank made an immense fuss about it, but the Dean, who rather approved of her decision than otherwise, said, it was a matter in which she was certainly at liberty to use her own judgment. Her motive was gone, but the habit remained the same. She remembered this, and sighed.

Basil did not quite understand, but he very much admired her ; that sigh puzzled him.

"There is one thing to be said," remarked Di, who felt he was looking at her, "ladies have no choice of partners. We must all dance with any one, who is kind enough to ask us, or tell an untruth."

"Well," said he, "I must confess, men do have an unfair advantage in that case, as in a good many others."

She smiled.

"The chain does not gall me, in the least," said she. "It is only in one essential point that men are to be envied; and I always have thought that I should like to be put into a profession, to be enabled to earn my own bread, as our kindred, on the other side of the Atlantic, talk of doing."

"I heard of a young English lady yesterday, to whom her mother, a somewhat popular authoress, had assigned a professional avocation," returned Basil.

"I have read the book, in which she gives an account of the prosecution of her studies," replied Di. "I liked it, because, though independent enough in action, it did not seem to make her unfeminine in principle. But I, for one, should be afraid to walk about London alone, as she did about a large continental city."

"What I am curious to learn is," proceeded Basil, in conclusion to a remark on the differ-



ence in this respect between England and other countries, "what I want to come at, is the fate of the profession, when its feminine disciple enters on 'the holy and blessed state of matrimony.'"

"All women do not marry," said Miss Gresham, gravely. "And the only real reason I can see for any change from the established order of things, in this respect, is, that it gives those an interest and an occupation, who, by remaining single, in process of time, necessarily lose their home ties, and home duties."

"All women ought to marry," ejaculated Basil.

"Still all women do not," repeated she, quietly; "and I suppose that fact is in reality the origin of this new principle, which, like all innovations, be they good, or be they bad, meets with so much ridicule at the outset."

He would have given anything to ask her, which course she considered most conducive to happiness, but he did not dare. The whole

tenor of her conversation was so free from that air of coquetry, displayed by most women, that his respect for her quite equalled his admiration. Her youth, her beauty, her indifference, nay almost contempt for pleasures and trifles which most women prize but too highly, completely puzzled him. If she had been married, he would have believed that in the calm recesses of another's love, her soul had found its resting place, far out of sight of human ken; and how he would have envied that man! But as Miss Gresham, he did not understand it. There was a clear, cloudless, untroubled look in her eyes, which forbade the supposition that she was in love: the idea was displeasing to him, and rejected accordingly; still less could he believe that she had ever loved in vain. In his own mind, he decided, that it was an utter impossibility for any one who had loved her, ever to forget her, that any one she loved could be insensible, was equally beyond all credence.

He was not in love ; of course not. It was, as he told himself, only the second time he had seen her, and all his life long, he had looked upon Romeo as a fool ; but everything Diana Gresham did, or said, interested him ; from a certain eagerness with which she spoke, when much interested, and under the influence of which her whole face lighted up, down to the utter tranquillity with which she waited for an answer. She was evidently in the habit of conversing with people, who thought before they spoke. At last, he said—

“ What profession should you choose ? ”

He was rather in hopes that hereby he might extract a confession in favour of matrimony.

“ I have one,” was the answer, which rather startled him.

“ What did you say ? ” asked he in amaze.

“ I am my father’s curate.”

“ Do you preach ? ” laughed he.

“ No,” said she, seriously ; “ nor exhort.

My father says, district visitors only do harm when they outstep their legitimate duties. I teach at our village school; that is quite as much as I can find time to do thoroughly. As it is, I am too much away from home to do much good."

' You are staying with your aunt, with Miss Courtenay, I mean ?' remarked he, interrogatively.

" Yes; but I am not going to remain in London much longer; I go home in a week or two."

" What shall you find to do when you attain her age, if you are in her position? It is not within the bounds of probability you should remain a curate all your life," said Basil, half in jest and half in earnest.

A slight cloud stole over her face.

" I never like to look far into the future," said she, sadly.

He felt quite angry with himself for having asked the question.

" And yet," proceeded she, " I always have

thought that literature—to write, to express all those thoughts, feelings, and opinions, which fill the heart, and yet find no voice in words, must be a high art, and a happy one.”

“It is the only road to fame open to a woman,” said Basil, seriously.

“I should not care for fame,” soliloquised Di.

“Did you ever try to put your thoughts on paper, in a connected form?” asked he.

“Yes, often and often; but I am never satisfied with what I write. I always feel as if I ought to do, and could do, so much better.”

“You are not the only person who has felt that there is as much despair, as delight in art; and, to me, there is as great art in the pourtraying of a character, as in the painting of a picture, or, in the chiseling of a statue,” returned Basil.

“True,” said she; “but the painter, the sculptor, and the musician, share not the

author's weight of responsibility. If either of the former make a mistake, it only mars their own labour; if the latter, we may impregnate the minds of others with a wrong idea, or worse still, misrepresent, or cast contempt on a right principle. Besides, no woman can ever hope to regenerate society, or even to mend it."

"Pardon me," interposed Basil; "I think many of the feminine writers of the day do an infinity of good, not by a world-wide or lasting influence, but by warring against minor and growing evils."

"A woman labours under such disadvantages," said Di. "She must either write for children, and that is dwarfing to the intellect, or she must betake herself to spinning novels and weaving romances. It is no use trying anything else; if she essays more serious subjects, she only brings forward ideas gathered from men's books, and arrays them in a new dress, a species of theft I despise. I always

think a man's classical education gives him such an advantage, not in power of language, only, but in a wider range of thought."

"Women are twice as quick as men, if their learning is not so deep or so profound," said Basil; "and, with the exception of Sir Walter Scott, and Sir Edward Bulwer, all our best novels are written by the fairer sex; and, after all, are not novels more read, than any other class of books? I do not take Thackeray or Dickens into consideration; they are isolated examples, and long may they remain so. I only wish all the imitators of the latter were ducked in a horse pond."

"On their shoulders lies all the responsibility of creating a new school of literature," remarked Diana.

"They have done well themselves, it is their followers who weaken their satire, dilute their wit, and so disgust us with their style," replied Basil.

"I think Harrison Ainsworth is downright

mischievous," said Diana, "and of all his Mrs. Radcliff's horrors, Jack Shepherd is the worst; he has overstrained history, and given one unpleasant idea enough in his other works; but in this he has no other aim, so far as I can see, but to incite little boys to admire villains and highwaymen; and now it is gone into a shilling edition, all the clever boys in the school get it, and read it. If people must write, they ought to keep some good object in view, if it is but a small one."

"I suppose authors, like other men, have to pay their butcher's and baker's bills," said Basil, "or we should not see them publishing and re-publishing so much trash, when once they get a name."

What turn the conversation would have taken next, it is not for us to say. Frank came up with Ethel on his arm.

"We are going on the water," said he, "should you like to come?"

Mr. Mohun had risen on their approach, but he did not seem disposed to leave her, so Diana



made an effort, and introduced him to her brother.

Frank had the most pleasing manner in the world, when he chose, and he began to talk of Furley Grange, and the part of the county in which it was situated, with that ease and self-forgetfulness, which—however much Diana might rail against society, as at present constituted—is only acquired by intercourse with the world. Mr. Mohun never made himself the topic of conversation, so it was only in answer to her brother's questions that Diana heard that he hoped to be a good deal at Furley Grange in the course of the ensuing year. He had been sent for home by Government to give some evidence before committees, with respect to the state of commerce in that part of the East, where he had been Consul for some few years. He did not see any immediate chance of the business which brought him arriving at an issue; they might enter on it directly, perhaps not till next session, at any rate, when that was con-

cluded, he should have six months leave to fall back on, no small boon to a man who had not spent twelve consecutive months in his native country since he left school.

All this passed on their way down to the river, but when they reached the boat, Ethel was not content unless she monopolised Frank's whole attention, so Diana and Basil Mohun were left to as complete a *tete-a-tete*, as though the other two were not sitting opposite to them.

From first to last, Diana passed about three hours in company with her new acquaintance, and for a wonder she had not to complain of his being either dull, vapid, or presuming. He looked on with an amused air at Frank's and Ethel's vagaries, for the latter was, as the former frequently and truly informed her, "a most arrant little-flirt," but their follies did not seem in the least to influence him; occasionally he would turn an enquiring glance on Miss Gresham, as though to ascertain how she took it;

but the grave look, which just sufficed to keep Frank's spirits within proper bounds, seemed entirely to satisfy him, and, in fact, enabled Basil to form a very just opinion of her character.

Mr. Mohun had, in truth, seen a great deal of the world; flirts of either sex were no novelties to him; for as Diana learnt, in the course of conversation, before he got his present appointment, he had been in succession *attaché* at the English Embassies at Paris, in Vienna, and at St. Petersburg. If he had not seen very much of society in the metropolis of a country, which believes itself to be the wisest, the discreetest, and the most reasonable in the world; he had studied social life in all its phases in some of the greatest cities of continental Europe.

The Gresham party were among the last to leave Fulham, but Miss Courtenay was not at all put out. She was delighted to see Diana enjoying herself, and sincerely hoped that for once she was doing so, after the fashion of other young

people. Just as they were stepping into the barouche, Frank discovered that the Edmonstones had departed, and left Mr. Mohun behind. He was very philosophical about it, and a Hansom failing him, said—

“He should proceed back to London on foot; he had often walked farther, and been put to worse shifts in a strange country.”

“By no means,” said Miss Courtenay, “we have a fourth place, pray get in, we pass Sir Gilbert’s very house: did you not know we lived next door?”

Mr. Mohun assented; but he did not think it necessary to state over and above, that he had watched Miss Gresham go out on the balcony that morning and feed Miss Courtenay’s parrot, or that he had been looking out of the window, when she went out for her morning walk, and had, moreover, been lucky enough to see her come in again. Nor that he had seen them all start for Fulham, which might have been the reason why Lady Emily

had not found it difficult to include him in her train.

If he did not reveal all this, he talked so well and so agreeably on other subjects, that on discovering that the Edmonstones were all dining out, Frank suggested he should come straight home with them, on which hint Miss Courtenay spoke, and informed him that a compound sort of repast, including the three meals of dinner, tea, and supper, was awaiting them in Curzon Street, that she should be delighted if he would join them *sans ceremonie*, for that they should none of them dress, &c., &c.

## CHAPTER VII.

Still, amazed with grief she stood,  
And her cheek to her heart sent back the blood,  
And there came from her quivering lip no word.

MRS. HEMANS.

As THEY entered the house together, 'Magog' called Miss Gresham's attention to a letter which lay on the hall table.

"It ought to have come by the general post this morning, Miss Gresham; but it was dropped by mistake in a box in South Audley Street, and the servant says they was too busy, I suppose they was too idle to give it back to the postman, or bring it here themselves before."

It was from home, and Diana was so pleased to get it, she did not much care how it came.

"My dear," said Miss Courtenay, "as it has

kept so long, surely you can wait another quarter of an hour. Do take your bonnet off before you read it, or we shall not get tea this half-hour."

Diana put the letter back into the envelope, and ran up stairs. She had not been very long, but Basil had returned from a still more hasty toilet, and was in the dining-room with Miss Courtenay, when the door opened, and she entered, looking as pale as death.

"Frank!" said she, "where is Frank?"

"My dear love," began Miss Courtenay, "you must be tired, you are as white——"

Diana did not heed her.

"Frank—oh! do call Frank."

Basil alone noticed that the open letter was in her hand. He had sprung up, and without knowing where to seek him, was going in search of Frank, when that young gentleman appeared, whistling gaily.

"I do not know what other people may be, I am really hungry," said he, "for save some

unripe strawberries; I have eaten nothing since breakfast."

His sister, who was still standing near the entrance of the room, laid her hand on his arm

"My dear Di!" exclaimed he, in alarm, for he saw she was struggling to speak; "what can be the matter?" and he looked fiercely at Basil to see if he had any share in this unusual disturbance.

Basil was guiltless; but he was relieved when at the same moment Diana put the letter into her brother's hand. She turned away incapable of speaking; but her aunt burst forth into a string of questions, conjectures, and suggestions.

Frank stopped them all, by drawing towards the table, and beginning to read.

Miss Courtenay, who was making towards her niece, armed with a glass of wine, stopped short to listen, and Basil held his breath in the extremity of his interest. The contents were as follows:—



“My Dearest Diana, I am so glad it is settled you should return next week, and your father, far from objecting, bids me tell you, with his love, that he should be glad if you could make it the beginning, instead of the end of the week : also, tell Frank from me that if he could bring you down, I think it would please his father ; he said but yesterday, he wished to see him. I am sorry I cannot give you so good a report of papa. I told you in my last he has not been so well since the hot weather set in. I did hope it would do so much for him, but his cough is not the least better for the change, rather the worse, and he seems so languid and incapable of exertion. Indeed I think he feels it himself, and that is one reason he will not be sorry to have you home again, and as for myself, Di, I miss you every hour of the day—never more than yesterday, when your father had walked across the common to see poor George Watford, who

is sinking very fast. He came in quite fagged, dressed for dinner in some haste, and came down to me in the drawing-room. He had hardly sat down, before he felt very faint, Alice ran to fetch some salvolatile, and my salts. I was most dreadfully frightened, for true enough, he had fainted away before she was back again with them. Of course your father made light of it directly he was himself again, but he must have felt ill, for he not only consented to go to bed directly, but he let me send for Rogers this morning ; and I have persuaded him to stay where he is till he comes. And now, my dear Diana, good-bye. You need not frighten yourself unnecessarily, because I have told you the whole truth, and kept back nothing. I will add a line when I hear what Rogers says. My kindest regards to Miss Courtenay, and believe me, my dear child, ever your affectionate mother,

MILDRED GRESHAM.

Basil could see enough to excite alarm and anxiety in this letter, but there was hardly sufficient to call forth the extreme agitation which Miss Gresham, who had sunk into a chair, was vainly striving to repress. Even Frank paused and looked up, as though to reason with his sister, but by a gesture Di motioned to him to proceed, and he went on.

“P.S. After what I said above, my dearest Di, I hope what I now have to tell will not be so great a shock, but any way I am afraid it is intelligence you will be but ill prepared to receive. It has come on me like a blow, for I never for an instant imagined that your father’s illness was of any serious moment. Even now I can hardly believe it, but Rogers is very positive. He says your father has allowed a trifling cold to have its way, till it has arrived at bronchitis, and declares that if he had been sent for earlier, or his advice followed when he gave it six weeks ago, matters would never

have come to this pass ; he pronounces that the disease has taken an "acute form ;" and, oh Di ! he does not hesitate to say that your father is in real danger. You know Rogers's way of pishing and pshawing every little ailment, and I knew by his silence directly he felt the Dean's pulse, that something was amiss ; but that he should be in actual danger, and that Rogers should think it his duty to tell me so, is what I never anticipated. I can hardly believe it even now. Under these circumstances, I need not entreat that you will not lose a single hour in returning home. Of course, Frank will come ; your father has just sent Alice down to beg that it may be so. It is unfortunate that Rogers should have postponed coming, till after he had gone his long round ; as it is, I have no time to write to Milly, for the postman is waiting, and if I had, I hardly know where a letter will find her, for ——"

Here the writer had broken off abruptly. Mrs. Gresham's was a most unstudied effusion ; it told everything that had happened so simply, just as it had all come to pass, and the feeling was so real and so unstrained, that though Basil knew nothing of the Dean, and little enough of his family, he was inexpressibly touched by it. The first sheet was neatly and legibly written, but the last was scrawled and blotted, telling of haste, agitation, and sorrow, far more plainly than the words it contained. Frank's voice had gradually sunk as he proceeded, and when the letter was concluded, he stood motionless for more than a minute, apparently stunned by the intelligence it contained. A sob from his sister aroused him. Diana had not shed a tear till Frank read aloud the passage, " Oh, Di ! he does not hesitate to say that your father is in real danger." Her face had been hidden in her hands since her brother began the postscript, but now

large and heavy tears forced their way beneath the closed lids, and through the clasped fingers.

Basil had set Frank Gresham down in his own mind as a gay, frivolous, young Guardsman—selfish, careless, and not a little vain, but pleasant to a certain extent, and as agreeable as a man who lives in the world, and for the world, is obliged to make himself. He changed his opinion when he saw him, with varying colour and trembling lip, throw himself on his knees beside his sister's chair, and entreat her to be comforted. Those caressing, affectionate words, that gentle, fondling air, were the direct impulses of a heart, which, when stirred, could speak loud enough.

Meanwhile, Miss Courtenay had found her eye-glasses, and was diligently re-perusing the letter—in truth, she could hardly believe the evidence of her own ears. She spelt it all through, she smoothed the envelope, which

Frank had in his agitation crumpled up, replaced those two ominous sheets, cleared her throat, looked over the summit of her gold-rimmed glasses, and spoke emphatically, pointing with her forefinger to the letter.

"My dear Di, your father is ill, he is in danger, yet nobody but yourself seems to have given up all hope."

Her niece raised her head from her brother's shoulder, and Frank rose to his feet.

"I have no hope. I have long had a presentiment some evil was at hand—why, why did I forget it? why, why was I so happy to-day? when he, he ——"

She could say no more, and Miss Courtenay did not seem prepared with an answer.

Basil heeded the despairing tone, but it was only afterwards, and alone, that these bitter words of self-reproach came back in all their full force.

"We must go to-night; there is a train I

know;" and Frank went to a side-table and sought out a Bradshaw from among a heap of rubbish.

He found it, but his hand shook so that he could not turn over its pages, nor his finger follow down the line the few trains that stopped at the Sutton station. Basil took the book; there was a train at ten, a slow one certainly, but it would be faster, by many hours, than posting down, to say nothing of the uncertainty of finding horses.

"Ten o'clock. There is half an hour for preparation—another half hour will get you to London Bridge," said Basil.

"But Di, it is impossible you can go at this time of night," began Miss Courtenay.

The mute agony of supplication in poor Diana's tearful face checked her words, even more than Frank's firmly uttered,

"She must go"

The bell was rung, the carriage ordered out again, but still Basil never once thought of



going. Magog set off in a cab to fetch some luggage for Frank; he was to put together anything he could find, and meet them at the station; such were his young master's orders. Frank had no heart to think of his own comfort, and if Gog had not suggested the expediency of this measure, it is doubtful whether he himself would ever have thought of it. Miss Courtenay left the room to have some of Diana's belongings put up; it gave her something to do, something to think of. Frank paced the room impatiently, till a sudden thought struck him.

"Di, my uncle ought to hear of this. I will send up the letter; stay, I will go myself; call for me in the carriage."

His sister had only moved or spoken once since the very first; her passion of tears was suppressed; there she sat, perfectly still, her elbow resting on the arm of the chair, leaning her head on her hand. She made a gesture of assent, and Frank, with an appealing look to

Basil, left the room. The quivering of the closed eyelids, a slight contraction of the smooth, open brow, more even than the unnaturally pale face, painfully affected Basil. He longed to kneel before her, comfort, and console her, as Frank had done, aye, and with thousandfold more of tenderness and love. He was almost frightened by the sudden violence of his own feelings. What right had he thus to regard a woman who sat there so immersed in grief, as to be unconscious of his presence near her. It was almost a relief to him when Miss Courtenay re-entered the room.

An ancient abigail followed, with Miss Gresham's bonnet and shawl; the carriage drove up, Miss Courtenay looked round for Frank, but before she could speak, Basil had anticipated and answered her question.

Poor Miss Courtenay ! They were very genuine tears, which rolled down her cheeks, as she embraced and kissed Di more than once ; but none the less did she scold her

handmaiden for being "an old fool and agitating Miss Gresham."

Basil took the opportunity of drawing Di's arm within his own. He did not know whether she was aware that he did so, till, as he led her down the steps, she said softly—

"You have been very kind, but I cannot thank you."

As he handed her into the carriage, her lips formed the words of adieu; but they were never uttered. Basil could not leave her thus. As Gog closed the door with an energetic bang, he sprang up on the box beside the coachman. He was not like other people, and he did not feel he had done anything peculiar, till in Grosvenor Square, Frank came out, hastily wrung his hand, took his place beside his sister, and he was left standing on the pavement, looking after the carriage, while a couple of powdered footmen, and a butler stood staring at him

and wondering who he was, and whence he came.

A conventional man would probably have recollected that he had had no dinner, and have thought it "a deuce of a bore." Basil did neither; he was indifferent, reserved, and collected in his manners, a keen observer, a satirical censor of the faults of mankind in general; but he never refused sympathy, never shrunk from doing a kind act to an individual. Nor had he any of that *mauvaise honte*, that very English stiffness, which prevents so many good and kind people from doing the good and kind things they would wish. He had too much self-respect ever to feel awkward. So passing by Miss Courtenay's door, and seeing Gog still on the threshold, he walked in, and up stairs to the drawing-room. Miss Courtenay was but too pleased to have any one to commune with, and if it was any pleasure to Basil to hear about the Gresham

collectively, the Dean, Di, and Frank in particular, he had his reward. Miss Courtenay talked herself hoarse before she had finished extolling her favorite niece.

## CHAPTER VIII.

It matters not at what hour of day  
The righteous fall asleep ; death cannot come  
To him untimely, who is fit to die ;  
The less of this cold world, the more of heaven ;  
The briefer life, the earlier immortality.

MILMAN.

DIANA felt like one in a dream, when at two o'clock on the early Sunday morning, she stood shivering, though the night was warm and bright, on the well-known little platform of the Sutton station. The station-master had a young, sickly wife and a large family of little children ; and the remembrance of a thousand little acts of kindness, on the part of Dr. Gresham towards them, and of many and many a time when Miss Gresham

had been the bearer of some little delicacy, such as fruit, wine, and jelly, which it was not in his power to procure for his poor, consumptive helpmate, rose to his remembrance, when he saw the well-known figures alight. Poor White came up to them directly. It is always something to have a welcome, however humble.

“Oh! Mr. Frank,” said he, touching his cap, “I am so glad to see you; I hardly looked for you by this train, but the pony carriage came up three times yesterday, and Miss Fanny did seem so disappointed, when the last train came in, and you were not in it.”

Frank, with an effort, asked what were the last accounts of his father.

“No better sir,” said the man, shaking his head. “Miss Fanny said her papa was in no pain, for he had been dozing all day, but Turner told me he did not think his Reverence would ever come down stairs again.”

White did not mean to be unfeeling, but it is never the custom in that class of life to varnish over the chances of life and death; they speak of them openly and freely; if his own wife had been dying, for whom he really lived and moved, he would probably have told them so even more plainly and forcibly.

Di thought she had given up all hope before, but she did not know how fondly she had cherished it till she felt her heart die within her, at these simple words. She was past tears now.

The station was a good two miles from the Rectory, and Frank was puzzling what to do, when Di put her arm through his.

"Let us go," said she, in a strange, husky voice.

Frank looked at her pale face.

"You cannot walk, Di; you must wait here; I will get on across the fields, and send down for you. White will take good care of you."



"That I will Miss Gresham; I'll light the lamps in the waiting-room in a minute; but let me run down to the Rectory, sir; I could wake up Turner, and be back with the carriage in an hour."

An hour seemed so long to wait, and Di begged so earnestly to be allowed to walk, that Frank yielded, and they set off; White pledging himself that directly it was light one of the porters should bring their luggage down in his own donkey cart.

That path down by the chalk-pit, across the park, and through the church fields, was a favorite walk with the young Greshams. Di had trodden it, many and many a time, with a light and happy heart, in company of Frank, Lionel, with her father, or with her own bright thoughts and hopes. How many bitter—how many painfully sweet recollections rose up and almost choked her now, as in the dusky moonlight the brother and sister followed it in almost unbroken silence. Diana

Gresham is not the only one in the wide-spreading ocean of whose life there lies an island, on whose shores the waves of memory break, with a heavy moaning roar.

A faint, subdued, light shone in the little ante-room to her father's chamber. How well they knew it! How many associations of happy childhood, clustered within that narrow room! Frank had slept there as a little boy before he went to school, and since then how many a long line of chronology and difficult page of grammar had Di conned over, while sitting in the window-seat, and waiting for her kind step-mother to hear her repeat her tasks ere she carried them down to her father's study. When the churchyard gate banged, an unusual sound at that period of the night, a figure came and stood in the open window, and when Frank and Di passing down the lime-tree walk, came beneath the shadow of the old silver fir-tree, they recognised the

form of the attentive watcher by the Dean's death bed.

Mrs. Gresham had softly removed the bolts and bars of the front door, ere they stood upon the long, low, whited door-step, where they had played many a game in infancy. Her mother's unnatural calmness as they stood in the hall, for a moment deceived Di, but when clinging to her fondly for a moment, she felt her tremble from head to foot; she divined there was everything to fear, nothing to hope.

In action, Mrs. Gresham was, for a time, merging the keener sense of sorrow, and with dry eyes she spoke of their father's imminent danger, and told how useless all remedies had hitherto proved. She did not appear to realise the literal meaning of the words she used, or rather repeated, so difficult is it to believe that the living and the loved can really die.

She harped much more on their not having

come when she expected them, than she did on their father's actual state. Frank explained the cause—the unfortunate delay in receiving that important letter.

“Di ought to have got it yesterday morning,” repeated he; “but it was mis-sent and we set off within an hour of receiving it.”

His excuses fell on dull ears; indeed the greatest proof of Mrs. Gresham's state of suffering was that, even if she asked a question, she never listened to the answer; she did not seem to understand it; all her thoughts, all her energies, all her cares seemed concentrated in the sick room; there not a word escaped her, not a want but what was ever anticipated.

It was the bitterest grief to Di, that when they at last stood by her father's bed-side, he did not know them. All day Friday, though Mr. Rogers thought him in danger, and had forbidden his leaving his bed, Mrs. Gresham said, on their way up stairs, their father had not seemed so very ill. He had

been feverish and breathless ; but his cough had not prevented his speaking a good deal.

“ Di, you know what your father’s bad colds generally are.”

Diana did know, and more, she felt how this neglected cold would end. Mrs. Gresham, who had seen it begin, could not realise the sad truth, which her every word enforced.

“ He talked of, and looked forward to your coming so much on the following day, Di. I do not think you and Frank were ever absent from his mind, and the last thing, when he had drank some tea, he bade me write to Milly, and hasten her return home. Poor child ! it will be but a sad wedding visit for her.”

Frank asked, in a husky tone, when his father had first lost consciousness, but his step mother must tell her story in her own way.

“ That evening, when the children came in to say ‘ good night,’ he bade Alice read the evening psalms, and when Fanny and Georgie

left the room, he told her she might stay instead of going down alone, and she did remain till I sent her to bed too, for her papa had fallen into a doze, and she had been running about for me, and helping all day long."

Even Mrs. Gresham could not deny that from this last epoch, the Dean had never been quite himself. He answered, when spoken to, but he never entered into conversation. All that night through she had heard him, at intervals, speaking to himself, praying and repeating passages of scripture, but she would not admit that it had been what Rogers had pronounced it in the morning, a species of delirium.

He had never mentioned his children all day, Saturday; whenever he had spoken, it had been unconnectedly of the propagation and spread of the gospel in the colonies. It was a subject to which the Dean had, in health, given much thought, and perhaps the dream, which in leaving C——, had so troubled his daughter,

had been caused by hearing her father say, that if he were offered a Colonial Bishopric, he almost thought it would be his duty to accept it. He did not understand how men, with their ordination vows upon them, could allow such an opening for work in their master's vineyard, to go a begging. Sutton parish, and the Cathedral town of C—, were never likely to be neglected, but it grieved him at the heart, to think that hundreds and thousands of home born, English men, women, and children, were living, and growing up in heathen ignorance, in lands, which acknowledge British rule. Diana had heard him say this, and the words on his lips, as they entered the room, were "*the harvest indeed is plentiful, but the labourers are few.*"

Her father's face was paler and thinner than when she last parted from him, and there was a look of distress and actual suffering upon his countenance, so at variance with his habitually cheerful, happy, contented expression, that Di

turned away in a voiceless, speechless, tearless, agony of grief. Doctor Gresham's eyes were open, but that his powers of vision were all concentrated on the unseen world, on that "far off land," whither he was hastening, was evident, for when Frank took the almost powerless hand in his, he strove to withdraw it, and spoke in plaintive accents, as though he was one who barred his progress, through that "golden gate," into "the glorious city," where, at last, he, his master's way-worn servant, would see his "King in glory."

Poor Frank! it was the first time his father had ever turned away from him. He made another effort, but it was as fruitless as the last; that action verified to him how near to Heaven, how far off from earth, and earthly ties, was the soul which yet wrapped in its "antenatal chrysalis," waited a glorious bidding to be free, and covering his face with his hands, he hastily left the room.

Diana sat by her father's bedside, till the



early summer dawn had merged into daylight, and daylight had grown bright with gay and garish summer sunshine. Few words passed between her and her step-mother; the one was looking with sad and earnest intensity on the face which would be so soon hidden from her view; a few days, it might be only a few hours, and he would be taken from her, and from her heart, towards Heaven, rose up a bitter wailing cry.

“Why had she not been with him, why had she been severed from him, during the last few weeks of his life?”

All the melancholy foreboding; with which she had parted from her father, were but too well remembered. Fantasies and temptations were rife even by the death-bed of the righteous. She reproached herself even for the small share of pleasure she had allowed herself to enjoy, in the interim. Poor Di! the shock was too recent, the blow too overwhelming, for her yet to feel comfort in the recollection

that her separation from her father had been a real act of filial obedience, an effort of self-denial, which, if not rewarded here, would be remembered hereafter.

The grief of the daughter was as characteristic as the anxiety of the wife. The one thing which troubled Mrs. Gresham, was that the Dean, from being reluctant, had now, unconsciously had supervened, arrived at positively refusing to take the hourly supplies of nourishment, on which his medical attendant declared his only chance of recovery depended.

The hour bell rang out, chiming its Sunday morning note of preparation to the villagers, then, in a whisper, Mrs. Gresham bade her daughter go down dress, and breakfast. She hesitated.

"Poor Frank!" said her mother, and Di went.

Alice and Fanny were old enough to understand and feel, and not too old to hope, but

but poor little Georgie ! Sickness and death were words, whose sounds, uttered in low and mournful whispers, had penetrated even to her happy nursery ; but of the loss impending over herself, she little recked, and when Di came down, she found her nestling in Frank's arms, and prattling to him of Heaven and angels. Poor little innocent ! that was all she knew of death. And that "perfecting of praise," how did it smite on the heart of one, who, from the force of habit, had come to look on life as the reality, death as the far off contingency.

Eating and drinking seem despicable accessories in the eyes of the living, when death is hovering on the threshold, but, nevertheless, at last, when his sister persuaded Frank to sit down to breakfast, he discovered that his long abstinence had left him very hungry, and even Di, such is the dominion of the corporeal over the æsthetical, went back to her father's room, more like herself, better prepared for action, and less like one who walks and speaks

in a trance, than she had seemed for the last twelve hours.

That was such a sad, strange Sunday ! Frank wandered from the drawing room to the dining room, from the dining room to his father's study. There he could not stay ; the open desk, the half-worn pens, the books of reference, on the green cloth library table, all bore traces of their recent use, by one, who might never again take his seat in that well-worn arm chair. Ever and again he would go up to the sick chamber. But it is there, that man, with all his bodily strength, and force of intellect, feels himself most powerless. He cannot sit, and wait, and watch, and throw his mind into minute cares, and occupy his time with trifling necessities, as a woman does. Great efforts, stirring acts are for him ; home duties, loving, careful, watchful tenderness for her.

Old nurse was to be thanked, when the bells began to ring, for church, she went out

into the garden and put a period to this unhappy restlessness, both of mind and body, by asking Mr. Frank whether he would be so kind as to take the young ladies with him to church.

“Miss Georgie will be quite good, sir.”

Frank had not meant to go, but nurse seemed to think it a matter of course that he should, and she was a person of some authority, though she did not seem as severe as usual on this day; as she followed her tall nursling into the house, talking to him the while, half familiarly, half respectfully, partly as if he were still a little boy, partly as if he were grown to man's estate, and with her apron to her eyes, spoke of days long past and gone, and by a not unnatural concatenation of ideas, of that one in particular, bleak, dreary, and wintry “twenty years come next December, when his poor mamma died.”

How heavily that day sped! Mr. Drummond, the curate came in after church to

make personal enquiries, and though ever since he went into the Guards, Frank, who had respected him very much before, had condescendingly called him "poor Drummond," and only occasionally vouchsafed to pronounce him "a good sort of fellow after all;" yet to-day, he was very glad of his company, and felt less low, less unhappy, less at war with himself, such is the force of sympathy, than he had been since the hour he reached his home. Mr. Drummond dwelt on many particulars, which his step-mother had hardly mentioned. Mr. Drummond thought the prevalence of the east wind, throughout all the month of May, and the greater part of April, had done the mischief; still, he confessed he had seen a great change in the Dean, when he came back from C——. During the twelve years he had been Dr. Gresham's curate, he had never, after his yearly absences, seen so great an alteration. It had struck him painfully, that his rector had become

an old man ; he had insisted on doing the same as before, read prayers, and preached just as often, and had gone his rounds from house to house as usual, but others besides himself had been of the opinion, that the Dean was sadly aged.

Frank thought, though he hardly liked to say it, even to Mr. Drummond, that the last had been a year of great anxiety to his father.

Mr. Drummond went on—

“ The surprising thing to me is, the rapid progress of the Dean’s disorder ; this day week he was doing duty as usual, though with hardly the same energy as is his wont, for in the vestry, after administering the Holy Communion, he complained to me that he felt the heat as oppressive.”

“ I wonder what Rogers thinks.” said Frank.

“ Rogers told me,” replied Mr. Drummond, “ that it was the ordinary run of acute bron-

chitis; he laid particular stress on the fact, that the patient was seldom alarmed about himself, or took any precautions till the danger was imminent."

"Rogers will be here presently, I hope; surely he must be able to do something," repeated Frank.

Rogers did come. He was not loquacious, but he looked very grave, when he heard the Dean had taken nothing since last night. He tried what he called an experiment. He had the blinds drawn up, admitted the glorious afternoon sunshine into the room, sent for fresh soup, desired Di to stand in the full light, and bade her speak clearly and distinctly to her father, and ask him to take some nourishment. It succeeded so far, that the Dean opened his eyes and looked towards his daughter.

"Hey! what?" said he in his own cheerful, quick manner.

Di pressed forward eagerly, but the moment



Rogers raised him up, and the food was brought near, Dr. Gresham relapsed. It was not in him to be impatient, but he waved them off, and turned his face away in a manner which proved the contention was worse than useless.

Frank was in the garden ; he could not stay in the house, when Fanny and Georgie came rushing down the grass walk to tell him that " Uncle Stanford and a grave, bald-headed gentleman were in the drawing-room, and that Bob was come too !"

True enough, Bob and his devoted slave, Alice, were seen stepping out of the window, as he reached the lawn.

" Hush," said Alice, in her soft, low tones, " hush ;" for the poor children, who had been in a state of restraint all day, and unoccupied by their usual Sunday avocations, were beginning gleefully, and a little noisily to welcome back the schoolboy.

Di had been called down, and with white

lips and trembling accents, was speaking of her father's state, when Frank passed through the open window. "The grave, bald-headed gentleman," who inspired the children with such reverence, proved to be one of the first physicians of the day.

Lord Stanford introduced him to Frank.

"After you left me last night, it struck me I might prevail on Dr. W—— to come down this afternoon. We left town by the two o'clock train."

After a few more words Dr. W—— went up stairs with Di.

"W—— is sure to be able to suggest something," said Lord Stanford, hopefully. "These London men see so much more of the sort of thing than Rogers can, who has only a case of the kind, perhaps, once in half a dozen years."

Frank was quite ready to be comforted.

"Rogers is still with my father, which is so far fortunate," replied he.

"Yes, yes," answered Lord Stanford, "we must not put a slight on poor old Rogers. By the way," proceeded he, "after I had settled with W——, I went down to the Abbey, saw Mr Liddell after service, and obtained leave to bring Robert down with me. Poor boy, he was quite overcome when I told him his father was ill, and in danger. I did not think the worse of him for it."

Frank remarked that "Bob was a good boy at heart; if he had been rough and domineering at one time from being so much with his sisters, Westminster had nearly knocked it out of him."

"Just so," was the response. "I am to take him back with me to-morrow if W——'s opinion is a favorable one."

Half an hour before, Frank would have been aware this was not a likely contingency, but now his uncle's strong faith seemed to inspire him, too, with hope.

For a time they talked cheerfully; Dr.

W—— visited the Dean, retired to consult with Mr. Rogers, and went back again to Dr. Gresham's bed-side. For the last half hour no sound had broken the oppressive stillness below, but Lord Stanford's heavy footfall, as he paced up and down the drawing room. He had caught the contagion of Frank's anxiety; Frank, whose hopes had gradually waned and died in the course of this long suspense.

Dr. W—— staid up stairs, Mr. Rogers came down. Frank turned away when he saw him take a chair without speaking. If there had been one word of comfort to utter, the old man had not preserved that oppressive silence. It did not endure more than a minute, and then he asked—

“Has Mrs. Glenny been sent for?” Milly was always a great favorite with him.

Frank bowed his head in token of assent.

“The Dean is not so ill, as that it should be necessary to assemble all his family, I

hope?" enquired Lord Stanford, the blood rising to his very temples. He asked the question, though he felt the truth.

"It is only a matter of time; it may be to-morrow, it may be the next day, perhaps this very night—" Rogers' last words were hardly audible.

Frank had walked to the window. His uncle's firmly compressed lips showed the struggle which he had to maintain with his emotions.

Dr. W—— went back to London; Lord Stanford remained at the Rectory. It was a relief that he did, for now Di never felt a sort of necessity on her to leave her father's room to be with her brother.

Sunday night passed, Monday morning came, but that evening, when the sun went off the room, and they ventured partially to admit the more sombre twilight, Di fancied she saw a change for the better in her father's

face. She moved across the room to the sofa, where, well nigh spent with three days and nights of anxious watching, her mother lay.

"Is that you, Di?" said a voice whose tones, save in delirium, she had little hoped to hear again, though she had prayed passionately and fervently, that he might know and speak to her ere he died.

She could hardly answer for joy, as she bent down and kissed her father's forehead; the next minute her mother had taken her place, and Di flew down to the drawing-room, where Lord Stanford and her brother were sitting after dinner, with the good news. Frank was up stairs in a moment; her uncle paused to ring the bell, and as he followed his niece more slowly through the hall, she heard him desire that Turner should take his pony and gallop off directly for Mr. Rogers.

"Tell him not to spare the horse," was his laconic order.

Di gained her father's room ; but the sight which met her eyes drove the blood back to her heart. Mrs. Gresham was in tears ; the first she had shed, and now that the flood-gates were once broken down, she sobbed almost without restraint. Frank was on his knees at the bed-side, straining his ears to catch his father's feeble accents. Lord Stanford held his niece back ; they were the last words of advice or counsel which would ever pass those lips, on which the dull hue of death was already stealing. He guessed their life-long effect.

"Fetch the children, Di," whispered her uncle, and he himself left the room, and gave some order below.

Frank stood back to let nurse, with streaming eyes, hold little Georgie up for a last kiss, ere she carried her out of the room. Bob thought it his privilege to stay, no one bade Alice and Fanny go, and they stood hand in

hand, as was their wont, trembling and shivering behind the bed curtains, almost too frightened to cry.

His brother had raised Dr. Gresham's head, and moistened his lips with wine, still the dying man looked round with a wistful gaze.

"Milly is not arrived, it is hardly possible that she should be here yet," said Lord Stanford, in a tone which he vainly strove to make steady.

The Dean looked up in his brother's face; he had not recognised his presence before; there was an unmistakeable look of affection in the glazed, sunken eye.

"I am glad you are here——" The end of the sentence, save the names of "Alicia" and "Lionel," was too feebly uttered to reach the ear, although Lord Stanford bent his head down to catch its import.

Still it was evident some other desire was uppermost in Dr. Gresham's mind; he could



MARRIED WOMEN.

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support them more. Mr. Drummond turned to the "Commendatory Prayer for a sick person at the point of dissolution." Frank never forgot the words, which he then heard for the first time.

"And teach us who survive, in this and other like daily spectacles of mortality, to see how frail and uncertain our condition is; and so to number our days, that we may seriously apply our hearts to that holy and heavenly wisdom, whilst we live here, which may in the end bring us to life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ thine only Son our Lord. Amen."

At the words "life everlasting," a radiant smile broke across the dying man's face, his eyes opened, and filled once more with light. What glories he beheld, who stood almost within the gates of Heaven—what illumined vision of "a new heaven and a new earth," gladdened the sight of one who had so meekly trod in his Master's footsteps, we know not. It was

something more than those who knelt around saw, for Dr. Gresham raised himself up in bed, stretched out his arms, and, with his last breath, uttered in triumphant accents, as though to him there was vouchsafed a sight of the fulfilment of the prophecy, "And the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

And so the Dean of C—— passed into the presence of the Eternal.

## CHAPTER IX.

Tell me who now who has passed away ?  
For whom is the death-bell tolling, say ?

ANON.

The air is full of farewells to the dying,  
And mournings for the dead.

LONGFELLOW.

AND where was Milly ? that she was not there to receive her father's blessing, to hear her uncle's words, as he laid his hand on Bob's shoulder, and said, emphatically—

“See how a Christian ought to die.”

The letter that apprised her of her father's illness only reached Ambleside on Tuesday morning. Captain Glenny and his pretty little wife had been at Keswick all the preceding week. They had been touring about, and finally left

the Derwentwater Lake for Windermere on the Saturday. Mrs. Gresham's letter directed hap-hazard to Keswick, was forwarded to Ambleside, but this had delayed the intelligence of her father's danger one whole day.

On the table in the sitting-room lay Mrs. St. Clair Glenney's letter, awaiting her coming down to breakfast; the moment she entered the room, she espied her mother's handwriting, and flew, with a little cry of joy, to seize the welcome missive. When, a minute later, her husband followed her down stairs, he found her crying bitterly.

"Oh! St. Clair! poor papa is so ill, we must go home directly."

Captain Glenney took the letter; the account of the Dean's health on the preceding Saturday was much worse than that, which, written on the Friday, had so alarmed our heroine.

"Yes," said he, musing, as he folded it up, "we must set off for Sutton to-morrow. I

suppose it does not make much difference whether we go now or next week, as we had intended ; I am nearly tired of the Lakes."

"To-morrow ? Oh ! St. Clair, let us start directly !" answered his wife, imploringly ; and she turned to the postscript, and held it towards him with a half frightened air.

"Do not lose a moment if you wish to be here in time," wrote Mrs. Gresham.

"It's all very well to talk of starting directly, and not losing a moment," said he ; "but I must see how we can best manage. Trains don't run every hour in the day to London from these distant parts of the country, and it is upwards of twenty miles from this to Kendal. However," added he, a little touched by the sight of her uncontrollable emotion, "we will start this very day, if you wish it. I will go down directly and look at the time-table below."

Two months of wedded life had taught

Milly how to value so great a concession, as that contained in the latter part of her husband's speech ; and she was proportionably profuse in her acknowledgements. Two months had not quite merged the gallant bridegroom into the inflexible lord and master, ; so Captain Glenny proceeded to say—

“Come, don't cry any more, there's a good girl ; if the Dean's time is come, tears won't save him—and if it's not, the doctor saying he is in danger won't kill him. There, Milly, dry your eyes, and run up and tell Jane to get ready for a start.”

Such was Captain Glenny's philosophy ; and if it did not afford any great comfort to his little wife, at any rate, she obeyed his concluding injunctions ; but the tears burst forth again as she told her news to Jane, whilome housemaid at Sutton Rectory, innocently read her the letter, and piteously exhorted her to make haste with the packing.



Jane loved her young mistress, and sympathised in her grief with all her honest heart, and consoled her to the best of her ability, pronouncing herself the while, "but a poor comforter," yet she proved an effectual one, for by the time Captain Glenney halloo'd for his wife to come down, "for the breakfast was getting cold," she had talked and cajoled poor Milly into a very tolerable state of composure, which was lucky, for if there was one thing which more than another put Captain Glenney out of all patience, it was a crying woman.

"I have made arrangements for posting over to the station forthwith, little woman," said he, kindly, as he met her at their sitting-room door. "If the Windermere branch line were not open, we could not do it; but as it is, we shall join the half-past eleven o'clock train at Kendal, which will get us up to London in rather less than twelve hours, and we shall

have time to breakfast in comfort before we start."

Accordingly, Captain Glenny made an excellent repast, and did his best to induce his wife to do so also; but, though he loaded her plate, Milly, who was in an inward fever to be off, could not eat, and she was very glad when Smith, the Captain's master as well as man, who had spent his time during the honeymoon ingratiating himself with Jane, came to say the carriage was packed, and at the door, and it was full time to be off.

Eating, drinking, and sleeping in comfort, were the primary objects of Captain Glenny's life when travelling; and, fortunately for all parties, he had plenty of time to refresh his inner man with luncheon at Liverpool, before making an impromptu dinner later in the day, at one of the large junction stations, at which the train stopped for half an hour. He did very well on both of these occasions, so well at the latter meal, that he grew peevish under

the process of digestion, and complained long and loudly of the discomfort of "feeding in a hurry," and of the fag of long railway journies.

Milly tried hard to be cheerful, and not to bore her husband by her depression, and anticipations of evil; nevertheless, he told her more than once, she was "deuced bad company;" and, indeed, she was not in the spirits she had been at the outset of their wedding tour; so, finally, when twilight came on, he laid himself down to sleep on the floor of the *coupé*, having first made it comfortable and commodious by help of all the cushions in the carriage. Poor Milly was glad to lean back in a corner, wide awake, and to think about her father. Sometimes she wondered what they were doing at Sutton, and then watching for the little villages past which she was whirled so swiftly, she would look out through the dim pale moonlight, for the simple country churches, speculate which

might be the Parsonage House, and musing on her own happy childhood's home, shed quiet, silent tears.

It was near midnight before they reached the great metropolis. Milly was well aware — for Captain Glenney's reading only varied from the newspaper to the Bradshaw, from the Bradshaw to Punch, and then back again to the time-table—Milly was well aware, that after ten at night, there was not another train down to Sutton till a quarter-past six next morning. Her husband had not promised he would start again so early; but she begged hard that they might drive to Curzon Street, on their way to their hotel, and ask what news Miss Courtenay had heard of her father.

"Dear St. Clair," was not very amiable about it; indeed, at first, he totally negated the proposition. He did not like Miss Courtenay, and he did not choose to run the risk of seeing her, and being bored; but he relented so far as to concede, or rather, Mr. Smith, in-

stigated by Jane, suggested that he should jump off the carriage at the point nearest to Curzon Street, make enquiries, and follow his master and mistress to Cox's hotel, where they were pretty sure to get rooms, for Captain Glenny preferred going to an hotel, to taking his parents by surprise.

Milly sat down in the dull, dark sitting-room, her aching limbs having hardly sufficed to carry her up so many weary stairs, too tired, too utterly exhausted, and too miserable to do more than throw aside her bonnet, and passively wait for the tea her husband had ordered for her refreshment.

Captain Glenny was in his dressing-room, anathematising the lock of his carpet bag, cursing the straps of his portmanteau, and swearing at Smith for being out of the way when that individual knocked at the door.

"Come in," said he, sharply.

"There's no hope, sir," began Smith; he did not see that his poor young mistress, nat-

tracted by the sound of his voice, stood in the open door-way.

An exclamation from her made him change his tone.

"There's been no great change since Miss Gresham and Mr. Frank got down, ma'am," said he, making, as he told Jane afterwards, a fresh start; "and the letter Miss Courtenay got this morning was sent off at six o'clock on Monday evening. The servants told me that Lord Stanford took a London doctor down—I can't rightly think of his name, ma'am—on Sunday afternoon; they seemed to say everything had been done that could," concluded he, looking at his mistress.

It was no use the man's trying to make the best of it. Milly made him tell her all; but when that all was told, she turned so pale, that even Captain Glenny was frightened. He led her back to the sofa in the next room, kissed her, consoled her, talked to her, till she was relieved by a refreshing burst of tears, and much

as he disliked the sight of them, he was merciful enough not to check their flow. He only once begged her to be composed, and used the best argument to enforce that necessity.

"If you agitate yourself so much, Milly, you really will not be fit to set off again directly."

"You will let me go—you will not mind starting so early, dear St. Clair?"

Who could have resisted the clinging arms, which twined themselves round his neck, or the soft yet burning cheek, which pressed up to his?

"I suppose I must let you have your own way," was the answer; and it was almost as softly uttered, as he had been wont to speak to her in the days, which seemed so long ago, when he had wooed and won that gentle, girlish heart.

She responded to his kindness by attempting to sit up and smile.

"Now, if you take my advice, you will go

to bed at once," said he ; "let Jane make the tea, and bring it to you there ; you really are not fit to sit up."

She looked up in his face enquiringly.

"I am just going down to my club, to see whether there are any letters for me, I shall be back soon. There, take care of your little self," and he kissed her.

She was so pliant and affectionate that he could do anything with her by kindness ; so much so that, though now she wanted him to stay, she never dreamed of putting her wishes in opposition to his. That was not to be thought of. On the contrary, she did exactly as he bid her ; but his "soon" appeared a very long time ; and "dear St. Clair," and "my own St. Clair," as she kept calling him to herself, had not come back, when she, at last, fell into a deep, heavy slumber. She did not think she had been asleep a moment, when she awoke with a start, and saw Captain Glenny standing at the foot of the bed. It was broad day-



light, and he was dressed just as she had seen him when smartened up, fresh, and swaggering, he had looked into her room last night. The splendour of his appearance was a little dimmed, but he was still in excellent temper. At first, she could not recollect what had happened; she was conscious of a dull, painful weight on her mind, and of a very aching head, but that was all. His first words brought it all back to her mind.

"Come, Milly, you must be getting up; it is half-past four—you have no time to lose. Time and trains don't wait for sleepy little women."

"I never heard you come back," said she.

"I have but just come in. Where was the use of going to bed at one, only to get up between four and five? I had my rest in the train yesterday evening; you would not have been so dead beat if I could have persuaded you to take a nap."

She was lying back on the pillow, looking at

him draw back the window curtains ; the past, the present, and the future, were all contending in her mind, and kept her silent.

"If you still are so tired," began he, "stay where you are ; after all it will be no great use hurrying down to Sutton by breakfast-time."

That roused her.

"Oh ! I had rather go. I only hope we may not be too late as it is," answered she, eagerly, and yet sadly.

"Very well ; do just as you please, I promised you should. Meanwhile, I will go and see about sending Jane to you ; as for ringing these cursed bells at this time in the morning, it's no earthly good."

Having expended all his spare energies in getting to London-bridge in time, Captain Glenny, long before they had accomplished half their journey, between natural sleepiness and habitual temperament, had become very tired and very fidgetty. There were not many stoppages on the way to try his patience ; but

when they got to the junction, the last station before they came to Sutton, he put his head out of the carriage window, and, in an important voice, asked one of the porters if he had chanced to hear how the Dean of C—— was.

The man looked up in his face, to see if it were any of the family.

“Dead, sir ; he died Monday night. The news come up the line yesterday, sir” and on he went, shouting “coming, sir, coming,” to some other unfortunate passenger.

Captain Glenny drew back aghast. He looked timidly at Milly ; but, happily, a jarring of the carriage had prevented her hearing either the question or the answer. He knew the intelligence would be received with such a burst of grief that he could not resolve on telling her. He was too selfish to think how deeply she would feel it, if it came on her with a shock, on her arrival at home ; but he satisfied his conscience by what he called preparing her—alias harassing—her, by saying—“She must

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not set her mind on her father's recovery ; indeed, he might not get over it at all," and so forth ; which was inconsistent, to say no more, seeing that all along he had persisted that not much was the matter, and that he was only hurrying home to please her, &c.

No other passengers alighted at Sutton ; and Milly did not notice that instead of fulfilling his duty of telegraphing the train on, that White unlocked the waiting-room door, drew up the blind, and opened the window. He apologised for the room being in disorder, and said—

"Passengers so seldom came by twenty minutes past eight train," and hurried off again." He fancied they had heard the sad news.

Milly went and stood in the window, and watched her husband engage a fly, which had brought an old gentleman from a neighbouring town. She heard him giving very loud orders about bringing down the luggage. For the first time, she heard his authoritative tones

with other people's ears. She did not like him to scold and rebuke the Sutton people, but they were so obliging that he had no cause for complaint ; and she leant against the window-sill, and looked out into White's pretty little garden, and thought the flowers did not smell as sweet or the air feel as soft anywhere, as it did at Sutton.

As she stood there musing, not quite unhappily ; there came pealing up the valley a sad and solemn sound ; the wind blew softly from the south, and she heard, with singular distinctness and clearness, clanging from the old grey tower of the village church, more than a mile off, the sound of the passing bell. It had not reached the first pause, and almost breathless with an undefined, yet horrible fear, she listened and counted the strokes. It was not George Watford, the head boy in the school, who lay a dying, for it went on past his few happy summers. Ten, twenty ; it was the great bell that boomed so loud and clear—

thirty, forty, fifty, and so on up to sixty ; and then, as if it were difficult to number these weary, latter years of human life, the heavy strokes rang out, still more slowly, one, two, three. Sixty-three ! Her father was sixty-three !

When Mrs. White came in, with her twins in her arms, and talked with streaming eyes of Dr. Gresham having gone to his rest, it did not seem like a blow to poor Milly. She had learnt the news already from an inanimate object. She did not cry—she was too much stunned—till the woman went on to say—

“The bell went out for your papa first yesterday morning, Miss Mildred, I mean Mrs. Glenny, I humbly beg your pardon ; but I understand that when a Rector, in particular one so loved and respected as the Dean, dies, they toll every morning so long as he is above ground. And it's right they should, for sure there was many a heavy heart in Sutton on

Monday night, when it got about Dr. Gresham was dead. It seemed so sudden like."

Then poor Milly's tears fell fast enough.

"I must go and tell Captain Glenney," said she, rising hastily. "Thank you, Mrs. White—" words failed her.

"La! Miss, the Captain knows it well enough; I heard him say to White that he was told of it as he was coming down."

"Milly sat down again. She went quite quietly to the fly when her husband came to fetch her, but her white veil was down, and he could not see her face. When they drove off he spoke.

"You see it is as I said—" began he.

"Oh! St. Clair! you knew it, and did not tell me," and she turned her head away, and sobbed aloud.

It was happy for her, perhaps, that she could cry. Diana had not been much older when bitter sorrow, borne in silence and uncomplainingly,

had well-nigh dried up the source of her tears. Since the few heavy, leaden drops, which had fallen unconsciously, in the first revulsion of feeling from pleasure and happiness to fear and sorrow, she had not shed a tear. She was wan, pale, and haggard, when she came to the door to receive the weeping bride ; her eye-lids were heavy from want of sleep, and she looked as if in these few days she had grown years older ; but she was utterly tearless—that relief was denied her, even when she took Milly up to see her mother, and heard their convulsive sobs.

Mrs. Gresham was in a sad state ; quite broken down by grief, her only solace seemed to be in rehearsing every minute fact relating to Dr. Gresham's last few days on earth. She never spoke on any other subject, but though Milly cried like a child, Diana sat and listened unmoved, not quite unmoved either ; for her sister noticed that she would close her eyes, and that the deeply fringed lids would quiver



almost convulsively, and her lips tremble, when the pain of her mother's narrative became almost insupportable.

Diana had not much time to sit still and nurse her grief. Mrs. Gresham, generally so active and so alert, was incapable of anything; she wanted almost as much care and attention as a sick child, she could not be left alone even for a quarter of an hour; night and day it was the same; she was never calm unless some one was with her, never contented unless speaking on that one subject, and at times Diana's best, and indeed only mode of consolation—reading aloud spiritual works—failed entirely.

Lord Stanford kindly staid on at the Rectory. Lady Stanford and Lionel were hourly expected at Sutton Priors; but he did not mean to join them there till the last sad rites were paid, still his hours were mostly passed with Frank in the study, looking over papers, making necessary arrangements, and answering letters innumerable.

Some of these fell to Diana's share, and besides with all their kindness and consideration for her, there were many things she was perforce obliged to do. A multiplicity of household arrangements, which had always been kept by Mrs. Gresham in her own hands, now fell to her eldest daughter's share. The servants had been used to depend entirely on their mistress, and could not go on without her, they seemed to have lost all their wonted activity, their solace—and they really grieved for so kind a master—was in talking, and, perhaps, it was for the sake of indulging to a fresh listener, which made the cook and housemaid come twenty times a day to Miss Gresham for orders.

Diana was clever, but by no means so intellectual that she could not use all her sense in the common affairs of life; it was fortunate that she could so apply it; perhaps it was better for her to have something to occupy her every faculty, and she got through her diffi-

culties better than most girls of twenty would have done.

It was not the least painful part of her duties to order mourning for her mother, the children, and the servants. Miss Courtenay was very kind in offering to select and purchase, still there were measures, patterns, and explanations to be sent to her, for the spinster lady would not trust to guess work, even for Alice and Fanny; everything she had a hand in must be well done. Nurse volunteered to go in the Sutton Prior's light-cart over to Dimborough, the only town within five miles which boasted of a haberdasher's shop, to purvey for the maids; but she would not start till Miss Gresham had calculated and written down every yard of bombazine and crape, of broad hemmed muslin, mourning ribbons, and the like. Diana's head ached as well as her heart, before that morning's work was half done.

Mr. Rogers, who looked in every day, met Diana late on Wednesday afternoon coming up

the passage from the school-room, where her mother sat secluded, doing nothing, seeing no one, but her own children. The hand she offered him was hot and feverish, he drew her back into the window, and looked hard at her, while he felt her pulse. The little old man was a character in his way.

"You never went to bed at all on Monday night," remarked he drily.

"No," said poor Diana.

"Did you lie down in the forenoon yesterday, as I bade you?" was the next question.

"I really had not time, I had so many letters to write and notes to answer," said she, in self-defence.

"And you slept last night in Mrs. Gresham's room, and did not get forty winks," proceeded he, speaking more from his knowledge of the parties concerned, than from previously acquired information.

"Indeed I had above two hours sleep on the sofa," was her exculpatory answer.

"Two hours sleep since Friday, which was the last night you spent in bed, according to my calculations," retorted he. "This will never do, Miss Gresham, it's not what the human frame is calculated to bear. I must beg that you go to bed to-night at ten, and that you are allowed to take your sleep out; if you can slumber the round of the clock, so much the better," and he walked grumbling away into Mrs. Gresham's presence.

Our heroine went down on her errand, staid, as she thought, a long time; but when she came back Mr. Rogers was still there.

"This little woman is going to sleep in her mamma's room to-night," said he to Diana, stroking Alice's dark auburn hair, as he rose to take his leave. "I've been telling Mrs. Gresham we shall have you ill next if we don't take care."

Mrs. Gresham was one of those people, who, if it is pointed out to them, will perform their duty at any cost. That was the reason she had

made the Dean so good a wife ; she had always followed his lead, and, what was more, the least hint enabled her to see her own faults, and to acknowledge them ; a very rare virtue, and one not much practised even by the best of people. She really was a good woman, and showed it now by forbearing to apologise to her daughter for her selfish indulgence of her own grief ; that would only have pained Diana, and have gratified her own feelings. She waited patiently till the dressing-bell rang, and then she said—

“ You will go down to dinner to-day, my dear, will you not ? With Captain Glenny here, he might take it amiss if you staid up with me. I am sure your uncle and brother will be glad of your company, you must not only consider me, Di.”

Diana said—

“ Yes, mamma,” but she looked anxious.

“ I have told nurse the children shall have their tea with me.”

When Milly and Diana came up after dinner, their mother was talking sadly and seriously, but not with overpowering grief to her little girls. It was the young bride's turn to stay with her mother, and, perhaps, it was as well that she was not by to mark with what pain the small party down stairs listened to Captain Glenny's talk on indifferent matters. Lord Stanford was not in spirits to check him, he had not a harsh, rebuking word even for him now. He sat graver and more silent than ever, making excuses for the joyous bridegroom in his own mind, excuses, it might be, that savoured of the kindly christian spirit, which had once animated the clay cold form, which lay so calm, so still, and so unmoved in the room above them.

That night, for the first time, Diana heard Frank read prayers, and in a voice and with an emphasis so like her father, that she rose all trembling from her knees; the servants were hardly out of the room ere Captain Glenny

began to laugh at some joke of his own on Frank's capabilities as a parson ; that jarring, jocund sound completely upset spirits, already over strained, and taxed to the uttermost, and with a faint cry that came straight from the sad, burdened heart, Diana flew out of the room up stairs.

Bob was marching slowly up to bed, when she passed him, he alone heard that passionate wail, saw his sister's suffused face and streaming eyes. He was not very demonstrative, but some quick impulse moved him, and he dashed into Di's little room, after her, before she had time to close the door. She flung herself down on the bed, and buried her face in the pillow, but Bob could hear the hysterical sobs which succeeded each other wild and fast, and the gasps of irrepressible agony, she vainly strove to keep down. Spent with bodily fatigue, worn out with exertion, Di's self command was gone. She was not conscious of his presence, till the boy put his arm round her



neck, and half crying himself, begged her not to be unhappy.

"It's all that fool St. Clair Glenney, I can't bear to hear him go on as if nothing had happened," said he.

"Hush, Bob, pray don't say so. Oh! shut the door, or mamma will hear," was the disjointed and almost convulsive reply.

If Bob—who was just at the age to despise kissing and coaxing as womanish, little thinking how kindly, and how soon, the man takes to practising wiles, which the boy calls folly—if Bob had been told yesterday, that he would spend half an hour, sitting beside his sister, crying, in company with, and consoling her, he would not have believed it, but, nevertheless, so he did, and with a very good effect, for his grief calmed Di's. If, after a very tender farewell, he looked in his sister's glass and ruefully surveyed his red eyes, he must be forgiven. It was the pardonable vanity of his sex.

## CHAPTER X.

The man who sleeps  
Beneath yon silent record of the dead,  
Needs no memorial \_\_\_\_\_  
The cenotaph of love is graved for ever on his people's  
    hearts,  
In letters of undying type. In brief, he was,  
For many years the shepherd to this flock.  
\_\_\_\_\_ He heavenward led  
Their feeble footsteps thro' the wilderness ;  
Cheered all their griefs and chased their doubts away.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Scarce twenty days  
Have passed away, since all the village stood,  
In silent sorrow, o'er his unclosed grave.

THE PARISH.

THE Dean of C——, "*died and was buried.*"  
There were but few mourners, as the world

has it, but they, with one only exception, were mourners in the truest, saddest sense of that familiar word. His two sons, his brother and his nephew, his son-in-law, and Mr. Rogers only followed the plain oak coffin which contained the mortal remains of Doctor Gresham.

It was a bright summer day, and the lime trees, whose growth and beauty, in life, he had been so proud of, diffused their fragrant odour, and shaded the church-yard, where he was laid to rest within a stone's throw of the home in which he had passed three and twenty years of a long and useful life. All nature smiled, but how desolate and how barren do the loveliest scenes of life appear to those who follow the dead past them.

On the north side of the old Saxon church, with his face towards that quarter whence the "*sun of righteousness will,*" one day, "*arise with healing in his wings,*" beneath the same grassy sod which grew thickly over the grave of his first wife, the heart which had beat so

warmly for the joys and griefs of others now rests in dust. How genuine had been his sympathy through life, with high and low, rich and poor, the honest and sincere feeling testified by all ranks on that day attested. By his own express and written desire, no pomp and no circumstance, no long train of ordinary friends, or their gay equipages followed Doctor Gresham to his last, long home. But he never thought of excluding the poor, and when Frank entered the old church, around which clustered the holiest memories of his father, he almost started, for every available pew, the long, low singing gallery and organ loft, were filled with people, all decently dressed in black—black, rusty and shabby enough, but, poor as it was, worn in token of a respect and affection, many a man might be proud to think had been felt for him when living, shown to him when dead.

From far and near the people flocked, who assembled and filled the church, and many a

parishioner came to-day, who, in the Dean's lifetime, had thought the prayers too long, or the sermon too dull to attract them. Some came, who, week by week, and year by year, had listened to him teach, preach, and exhort ; some one or two came, who had never set foot within the sacred edifice, save on the days they were christened or married. Kesia Nightingale, an old gipsy hag, who yearly visited Sutton, travelled many a weary mile to see, as she said, "the last of him," and her dark, withered, weather-beaten upturned face, and black glistening eyes, as she, an outcast, stood in the aisle, listening, with mingled surprise and wonder to the psalm and lesson, dwelt on Frank's mind for many a long day ; the worn black crape, placed, for that once, in her life, on her brown velveteen bonnet, affected him almost as much as had the sight of his step-mother's weeds that morning.

People, who advise harshly, who treat poverty as a crime, and expect poor, ignorant

men who work hard for a crust to put in their children's mouths, to be thankful when they give money with one hand and a rebuke with the other, may talk of the poor as ungrateful ; but then, now, aye and for many a coming year, the simple inhabitants of Sutton have, and will remember good Doctor Gresham. Children look back to the time he was among them, which they can hardly recollect, as a halcyon era.

The inevitable return to the common affairs and ordinary routine of life, which follows the day of burial, is not the least painful part of an affliction such as this. Lord Stanford curtailed his usual stay in town, and moved to Sutton Priors ; he was at the Rectory for some hours every day, but it was a very sad, sorrowing party, which still remained there. Captain Glenny's cheerful conversation and resounding laugh did not do much to comfort them, and Di never before felt so keenly, how uncongenial a spirit, how unsympathising a nature was that

with which poor Milly had allied her family. It was not a time when anybody was likely to express this feeling in words, but Di fancied her sister felt it as much, or more, probably, than any of them, her eyes filled each time that her mother pertinaciously refused to join the party down stairs, and when Captain Glenney, at the end of a fortnight, talked of going away, she made no opposition. A little while after Di went to seek her in her own room. She was surprised to find the little bride in tears, and Milly, on being detected weeping, flung her arms round her sister's neck, and said—

“I can't bear to leave home, but I think we must go, Di, I am sure it will be better.”

Di could truthfully kiss and re-assure her by repeating how grieved she should be to lose her, how very much she should miss her.

Milly thought a minute, and then she added—

“You see it is not to be expected that

dear St. Clair should be as sorry for poor papa as we are, Di."

On such wise did she apologise for much that might have been called unfeeling in her husband's deportment.

Time passed on, and the Glennys, after visiting his family in London, followed out their original plans and went abroad. They were not to be back till late in the autumn, and it behoved Mrs. Gresham to rouse herself from the state of apathy into which she had sunk, and make some plans for the future.

Dr. Gresham had not left his family so well off, as many people, judging by the plain, simple, and unostentatious way in which he had lived, both before and after his preferment, anticipated. On his first marriage, he had insured his life for five thousand pounds; this sum he had bequeathed at his own death, share and share alike to his two children by that marriage. Mrs. Gresham, the second, had brought with her another five thousand



pounds, and her husband had then insured his life for half that sum, both tolerably heavy policies for a man upwards of forty to pay out of an income which though rated in the clergy list at eight, was in reality, a very short seven hundred a-year, and the one or two bonuses, which fell to his share in process of time, had proved very serviceable in meeting the necessary expenses of a young and increasing family.

When Dr. Gresham was made Dean of C——, he doubled his second insurance, and moreover he managed in the twelve years he held that preferment to scrape together a sum which, with interest and compound interest, by this time amounted to little short of another five thousand pounds.

Lord Stanford wondered that so rich a Deanery as C—— had not enabled his brother to lay by more money for his second family, for after all, speaking in round numbers, fifteen thousand pounds, which would realize, at the

outside, five hundred a-year, was all that was left to Mrs. Gresham, with which to bring up her four younger children, the principal, according to her marriage settlements, and her husband's will, being to remain untouched and to be divided equally between their five children after her demise. His brother did not marvel long, when, as co-executor with Frank, he came to look into the Dean's affairs and accounts. Dr. Gresham had been open-handed in charity, and a fifth part of his income had always been divided between the poor and certain religious societies, not to say that he had always shown himself liberal in the extreme to all those dependant on him. It was hardly likely that a man so just and generous, should leave any great accumulated wealth behind him.

Frank, it appeared had been one of those who thought his father a much richer man than he really was, and for many a day after he discovered the truth, he appeared gloomy and

sad, and at times lost in reflection. He said but little on the subject, but that little was to the effect that "they were travelling fast down hill," "going to the dogs," and so forth. Di could not bear to hear him say this, it seemed to her like a reproach to her father's memory and forethought, although Frank did not mean it as such. Mrs. Gresham had talked over with her daughter how they should best manage, and the two had made it very clear to themselves that they could live quite comfortably on this small income; the three little girls would, of course, be educated at home; the only difficulty was how she should ever be able to afford to send Bob to Oxford, but Mrs. Gresham was content to trust till that necessity arrived.

Di was walking with Frank in the garden, in the cool of the evening, when she imparted to him all her mother's plans.

"So you have made up your mind not to accede to Miss Courtenay's wish of having you

to live with her?" remarked Frank, lighting his cigar.

"Yes, I told you my reasons the other day," answered Di, "if my aunt were infirm or ill, that would quite alter the case, but mamma cannot bear the idea of my going away even to stay for a long time to come; she so dreads leaving Sutton, and establishing herself elsewhere."

Frank puffed away at his cigar.

"I think you are right," said he laconically, "you mostly are."

Anybody who was in the habit of hearing Frank order, direct, and rebuke his sister, would not have imagined he thought so; but he was in a very humble and subdued frame of mind just at this juncture.

"If there were no other reason," proceeded Di, "I should profess to live with Mamma, as it is the only way in which I could ever persuade her to accept the yearly interest uncle Stanford says I shall have. For a long

time she refused to take a farthing, but I have got my own way at last, but only on condition that I keep the same allowance I have had for my dress and pocket money, ever since I left school. She persists in that ; she says my father left that five thousand pounds to you and me, Frank, because he could not bear the idea of our being entirely dependant on the caprice of others."

Frank's responsive sigh almost amounted to a groan.

"I wish I could persuade you, Frank, that we shall do very well," persisted his sister, mistaking the cause of this expression of feeling. "I really am not in the least anxious about the future, particularly now Uncle Stanford has been so kind in offering mamma the cottage on Furley Manor Farm, rent free."

This was the house Lord Stanford had destined for his son's abode on his marriage ; he had put it into thorough repair, papered, painted, and beautified it, laid out the garden

afresh, and for nearly a year it had stood unoccupied. The real farm-house and farm yard were situated just across a road about a hundred yards in the rear of the premises of the cottage, so that it was not desolate; but it was in such a retired out-of-the-way part of the country, that picturesque and pretty as was the spot, his steward despaired of ever finding a tenant in these days, when everybody seeks a house in the close vicinity of a railway-station.

Lord Stanford was very anxious to do something for his brother's family, still he was aware that his widow was not more likely than the Dean had been himself to accept pecuniary aid. It had been for some years a sore subject with him that his brother would accept nothing more than the living of Sutton at his hands. The fact was, Dr. Gresham had been very well aware that when his brother came into his title, he had found the Sutton Priors estate in a deplorable condition. The late Lord had left every penny and every stick, which was not

entailed, to the children of the unhappy woman who had called herself his wife ; he had begun by being extravagant in his youth, and had ended by being stingy in his old age. He had pulled down the old Priory, and built a new mansion so large that he had not been able to finish or furnish it ; that work was left for his successor. The family mansion in Grosvenor Square had for years of his life been only inhabited by the rats, some of the estate had been heavily mortgaged, and, by way of saving money for his rapacious sons, the old man had screwed his tenants till every farm on the property sunk to half its actual value. Lady Stanford's fortune of twenty thousand pounds had paid off the heaviest mortgages, but it had required years of good, prudent management to bring everything into proper order, and during his first wife's lifetime, Mr. Gresham had been wont to say that he, in his Rectory, was in reality a richer man than his brother, with his enormous property and heavy rent-roll.

Lord Stanford had sounded Mrs. Gresham on this head, but he found that to live rent free in the cottage was all she would consent to do, and she had her scruples even about that ; while Frank, who generally yielded in everything to his uncle, on this occasion sided with his step-mother, and agreed with her that since Lionel was married and required a separate establishment, they ought not to take more from his father.

But to return to the pair in the garden.

“Mamma wants us to drive over to the cottage, one of these days,” remarked Diana.

Frank did not heed her.

“Everybody can make a sacrifice for my mother but myself,” burst from his lips. “You give her up more than half of your income, Di, small as it is; my uncle finds her a house, and is laying out no end of money to make it comfortable. I only do nothing, I, who have as many hundreds a year to provide for my own selfish gratifications, as she has to



bring up and educate four unhappy children."

"Oh! dear Frank, do not distress yourself, you are not selfish, nobody but yourself would ever think of saying so," exclaimed Diana warmly, "and far from expecting anything from you, mamma was only saying yesterday how happy it had made poor papa to think you were provided for."

"I dare say our poor mother does not expect or even wish me to do anything for her," was the gloomy answer; "but that makes no difference. I know who ought to assist her by paying Bob's expenses at Westminster. Though he is a Queen's scholar, she will find him a heavy drag on her small means. Besides," continued Frank, getting more and more vehement, as he grew more and more angry with himself, "if I am in debt with an allowance of five hundred a year, what is to become of that boy when he grows up, without a penny, I should like to know."

Diana did not answer this last query.

"In debt, Frank?" echoed she aghast.

"Yes," repeated her brother, "in debt, or rather I should be if it were not for this two thousand five hundred pounds. I have told my uncle, and he advises me to pay off everything, and start clear. Yes, you may well colour, Di; if you blush for your brother, what must other people think."

His sister made no answer in words, she only clung to the arm she held the more fondly.

"Yes," said Frank steadily, "you shall know me for just as great a sinner as I am; I have been in the Guards exactly four years, Di, I am two-and-twenty, and I have run through about a couple of thousand pounds, besides the five hundred a year Miss Courtenay allows me."

"I have often heard it said—Captain Glennys was remarking only the other day, that a man in the Guards had necessarily many more expenses than in any other regiment——"

began Diana, who at last found voice to speak.

"I suppose you would swear I was in the right if I burnt the church down, or committed any other madman's act," said Frank with a sad, yet gratified smile; "but it's no use making excuses for me, Di; I have done very wrong and foolishly, and if I did not know it, do you think I would ever have humbled myself by confessing my extravagance to my uncle? No! he is the last man in the world I wish to see turn away from me."

"What did Uncle Stanford say—was he very angry?" asked Diana, breathlessly.

"He said very little. I would far rather he should have launched out, and pitched it into me, as he did into Lionel, when he left Eton ten pounds in debt; and, as for being angry, he only remarked it was little use reviling a man who saw his own error. The bitterest thing he gave utterance to, and that was not said sarcastically, was, that as

co-executor, and as my father's brother, he could not permit my mother to be beholden to me for one single farthing, till I could tell him, on my honour, that I brought down my expenses, and practically proved it by living on my income."

"I think he was right," said Diana, softly.

"Yes," returned Frank, with a heavy sigh, "I suppose he is, and my only comfort is, that when all is paid, I shall have about three hundred pounds of my patrimony left; that, with his concurrence, is to be invested, and both total and interest laid by for Bob's benefit; he will want it when he leaves Oxford, if not before."

"It is very good of you," exclaimed Diana, warmly; "but Bob declares that nothing shall induce him to go into the Church."

"Ah! well," said Frank, "we shall see; it's not for me to lecture him. But I must tell you, Di, this is not all talk on my part,

I've resolved on reducing my expenditure forthwith, and Sittingbourne, Phyllis, Daniel, and The Colonel will be put up at Tattersall's next Monday ;" and as Frank flung the end of his cigar over the holly hedge into the meadow, he breathed a sigh for the hunters he should never mount again.

"Oh ! Frank, but Aunt Diana will never be satisfied unless you have, at least one horse to ride and drive."

"I shall keep Susanna ; I should not like to sell the horse my father gave me ; she is so old, though as high-couraged as ever, that she would not fetch twenty pounds ; I could not bear her to be bought cheap, and ill-used or worked hard in her old age. She'll do for my work—drag me out to dinner and so forth—and pretty nearly save her keep in cab hire."

However much she might practise self-denial herself, Diana could not bear to hear of her brother's sacrifices.

"And the beautiful high phaeton my aunt gave you last year?" said she sadly.

"Travers has bought it," was the quiet answer. "You see, Di, I can't keep up the ball as I have done on five hundred a year. I may as well pull up at once, for as for taking more from Miss Courtenay, it's what I can't and won't do. As it is, what with paying for my commission, and buying me on by steps, and the presents she is for ever making me, I take a great deal more from her than I ought. When I went into the army, she made me a statement of her expenses, and asked whether I could manage on the allowance she proposed. That woman," said Frank, soliloquising, "was born with the spirit of a minister of finance. According to her own account, she has barely three thousand a year, and she makes it go as far as many people do five. Fancying herself too old to insure her life, she lays by annually a good round sum for your future benefit, Di;

that's a heavy pull. Let nobody say our old aunt is selfish, for she would like nothing better than to give up her apartments in the Palace, and take a little place in the country instead, but for our sakes she will not do it."

"It was partly on my aunt's account that I regretted your selling all your horses. I am afraid it will annoy her so much," answered Diana, anxiously.

"If you think, Di," rejoined Frank, emphatically, "that when my father's wife gives up her carriage horses, and comes down to a pony chaise, without a murmur—when my own sister parts with her riding horse, and the children with their ponies; if you think that, under these circumstances, I could reconcile it to my conscience to keep an unnecessary horse, you are very much mistaken. I've been a selfish fool long enough; I only wish I had attended to my father, when he asked me

whether I was not going a little too fast. He knew the value of money better than I did ;” and poor Frank sighed heavily.

“I know you are right ; nobody can admire the way in which you are making these sacrifices, more than I do,” began Di, fervently.

“The less said about admiring my conduct the better,” interrupted Frank ; “your overweening love is enough to spoil any man, Di.”

And for the first time Frank thought with pity, how poorly his unhappy cousin had replaced this devotion.

“But it grieves me,” persisted his sister, “and I am sure it would grieve mamma, to think that you feel so bitterly on the score of her circumstances. Believe me, mamma will find getting rid of the horses rather a relief ; she always preferred driving in the pony-carriage ; and now Uncle Stanford has per-



suaded her not to sell the brougham, but to keep it for occasional use with post-horses; I am quite satisfied on her account; and, as for poor Sybil, it is not so long since Uncle Stanford gave her to me, I have not had much use of her this last year, and it is not like selling her, not half so bad; for my uncle has promised to keep her at Sutton Priors till I want her, though, when that will be, I do not know; however, when I am staying there, I shall always be able to ride her."

On this wise did Diana reason with her brother; and when Bob came out to tell them "tea was ready; and that mamma was afraid Di would catch cold, for the mists were rising;" she had talked him into a very tolerable state of resignation.

*A propos* of Bob. It was a great distress to Lord Stanford to find, that the boy set his face against the church as a profession, which he did, averring—"He should never be so good a

man as his father ; and that if he was not good," so he expressed it, "he had better try his hand at something else."

His uncle would have liked to look forward to his succeeding his father at Sutton ; but it was useless expecting so determined a temper to bend, not to mention that he had a faint idea that the Dean thought the holding of livings, making them a sort of hereditary provision for the offshoots of a family was a bad plan ; so, after a great deal of thought, and at the end of about two months, he resolved on offering it to Mr. Drummond.

"There was," he thought, "no one so likely to carry out the Dean's principles, practices, and plans."

As long as the living was not given away, Mrs. Gresham was content to remain at the Rectory ; but no sooner had it passed into other hands, than she was anxiously restless to be gone. It was in vain Mr. Drummond pressed her to remain through the ensuing

winter, offered, when he was legally obliged to take up his residence in the Rectory, to confine himself to two rooms. Mrs. Gresham, though grateful, would not listen to either proposition; she truly said, that go they must, one time or another, and delay by no means lessened the pain of leaving the home where all her children had been born and brought up; besides, it would be better if they were settled in their new abode early in September, so that they might have fine weather to reconcile them to the change.

These were her avowed reasons; but Mrs. Gresham had others which she kept carefully confined to her own bosom. She had heard quite enough from Lady Stanford about Lionel and his unhappy marriage, to make her very anxious to get away from Sutton before he and Florence arrived there on a visit of some months' duration. August and part of September they were to pass at Leamington, where Lady Vaughan had temporarily established

herself, for Lionel, though he could not be persuaded to go abroad again, was too kind-hearted to separate his wife from her mother, though he had his doubts whether harm rather than good might not result from this meeting.

## CHAPTER XI.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,  
Children not thine may tread my nursery floor.

COWPER.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful  
joys,  
Tho' the deep heart of existence beats for ever like a  
boy's?

\* \* \* \* \*

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden  
breast,  
Full of sad experience moving toward the stillness of his  
rest.

TENNYSON.

It was with a very heavy heart, that  
Diana saw the time draw on which was to  
sever her from her home, that home where she

had passed the pleasant season of youth—the golden time, the bright, the happy, and come what will still the unforgotten ; those careless days which she should never know again, the early, fresh, untroubled hours of girlhood, which had flitted by so lightly ere the first wakening of passion, or the last coming of grief.

Frank was very glad to have it in his power to see his family settled at the cottage before he went back to join his regiment. It was rather an object, therefore, that the move should be accomplished before his three months' leave had expired. Lord Stanford pressed him to run down for a few days' pheasant shooting about the first of October ; but Frank excused himself to his uncle, by saying, he could not absent himself from his duties, at present ; he must devote himself to drills and parades, in order to secure a week or so at Christmas for his family.

Finding there was no possibility of inducing

Diana to leave her mother just yet, Miss Courtenay proposed herself on a visit to the cottage; she meant it kindly, and did her best, as she said, "to cheer them;" but her topics, and she talked incessantly during the few days she staid, were not always of the most pleasing nature. The first time she found herself alone with Diana, she favoured her with her opinions on the subject of Frank's retrenchments.

"Ah! yes," said the old lady, "he is just like all you Greshams; one would not think he had any Courtenay blood in his veins—the Courtenays were always prudent, careful people. Now, Mr. Frank can do nothing by halves, he is his father's own son in that; however, if he chooses to sell his horses, it is no business of mine. I always thought he kept too many; but, as I told him long ago, it is enough for me to give him his allowance, and he may spend it his own way—or not spend it at all, if he likes that better. It never does to shackle young

men, so I have not said a word to him about it, and you need not tell him what I think, Di."

Diana assented, as was expected of her; and reading a letter she had received from Frank that morning, spoke of her brother having refused to go to Sutton Priors.

"So, so, sets the wind in that quarter?" exclaimed Miss Courtenay, in high glee.

Her niece looked the astonishment she felt.

"Yes, yes," proceeded her aunt; "I thought how it would be. Those sorts of hallucinations do not last very long—though they cost one no end of anxiety while they endure."

Diana was quick enough to perceive, as, perhaps, the reader has not, that Miss Courtenay was covertly alluding to the thralldom in which, not many months before, Florence had held Frank, her willing slave. It was a topic she particularly disliked, so she bent a little lower over her drawing, and remained silent.

Miss Courtenay went on—

"I thought how it would be when I took



upon myself to tell him of Mrs. Gresham's having gone to Lady Grimshaw's ball the day of the Dean's funeral. He was very angry about it, and said he would enquire into it, but, because her name was in the paper, was no reason she was there."

"It was not," said Diana, in a low voice; "and aunt Alicia told mamma, at the time, that they had been very much annoyed by the mistake."

"It was no mistake!" said Miss Courtenay, triumphantly; "I knew it from those who saw her there; and I undertake to say Frank found out I was right, for I heard no more about it from him, though he staid the week, when he came up on that business."

"It was not kind of her; but then she never knew my father," and Diana suppressed a sigh.

"It was very bad taste, if it was nothing worse," remarked Miss Courtenay, tartly. "If it had been only that once I should not have

thought so much of it. Lady Grimshaw's was a temptation certainly, but she was going out all the week before, in reality. She did not go to large parties, common decency forbade that, but she dined out, and went to the opera, and was at the French play, pretending to sit behind the curtain of her box, and be incog."

Diana looked pained.

"I should not have thought Lionel would have allowed it," was her only comment.

"Allow it!" repeated Miss Courtenay; "not he, indeed. The two days he staid in town, she went nowhere; that only made it the more marked, but," added she, in a lower tone, and more as if speaking to herself, than addressing her niece, "if half that I hear be true, that is not a very happy household."

Diana made an effort and turned the conversation; but Miss Courtenay was right, the world were beginning to talk about Florence. It had talked, although gently, of her flirtation with Frank—but he was a near relation, and

Mrs. Gresham had wit enough to lay a good deal of stress on that fact. When the young guardsman vanished from the scene, however, his immediate place had been supplied by a former acquaintance, and a far more devoted admirer, and one who was hardly likely to be very content to be numbered among the group of *soupirants* she delighted to gather round her. "There was safety in numbers," but, as the Vicomte de Chavigny was prodigal of his attentions, and made no secret of his devotion, they were good-naturedly on the *qui vive*; the more especially as since his uncle's death, Lionel had availed himself of that excuse for avoiding the turmoil and bustle his wife called gaiety. Thenceforth, he ceased to accompany her into society. Florence was not sorry, for though, in words, she defied his authority, her husband's tranquil gravity was ever a sort of restraint upon her; besides that, his simple presence had sufficed to keep her out of the very fast set among whom she aspired to take

her stand. At first, people had joked, and said that considering theirs was a love marriage, Mr. and Mrs. Gresham did not seem a very devoted couple. He ceased to be seen with her; and then it began to be whispered that they did not live very happily together

This was in some sort true, not that they ever quarrelled now; Florence had not time for that domestic pastime, morning and evening alike saw her immersed in the great sea of pleasure, and since the repulse his efforts on the birth of their child had met with, Lionel had made no further attempt to reclaim his wife. Outwardly, he was all that the most dissipated woman of the world could require in the most complaisant of husbands, but so subtle is the atmosphere of opinion, that Florence *felt* the disapprobation he never expressed in words, saw it through his most guarded manner. A strange kind of peace subsisted between the married pair, and that there was peace was Lionel's merit not hers, for Florence

was habitually defiant, always prepared for attack, ever ready to wound. It was a peace which could hardly endure through the long life, which, to human ken, stretched far out before them, simply because it was so unnatural. In the foreign society, in which Florence had acquired all her knowledge of social ties, this state of things lasts for years, the husband goes his way, the wife follows hers, but we rarely see it in England. The honest, sincere, open and demonstrative nature of our countrymen does not allow of it, and in particular with one so full of heart, so enthusiastic in feeling as Lionel, the violent binding together of two such antagonistic natures, could be of no long duration.

They had not been long at Sutton Priors before Lady Stanford saw more occasion than ever to tremble for her son's future. Florence's habit of bickering had passed away, but, on the other hand, she behaved as if there was no such person as her husband in existence ;

formerly, Lady Stanford had tried to think, that where so much bitterness subsisted, there could not be the entire indifference which she had professed, and in which Lionel believed. Florence now no longer took the trouble to testify any dislike towards her husband personally, but contented herself with tacitly demonstrating the most sovereign contempt for all those people and things he most esteemed. This cessation of hostilities boded no good, it had in it something of that lurid, heavy stillness that impregnates the atmosphere, presaging the far off storm ; the peace, such as it was, had no concealed love in it, for how could love exist, where it was so very evident there was neither sympathy, respect, nor even, as a basis, the desire to charm.

Lady Stanford's only hope for her son's happiness now lay in the passionate affection, almost amounting to idolatry, with which Lionel regarded his little girl. If the child had been a year older, she would not have

been so struck by it, but a mere infant yet, it was very young to inspire such tenderness in a manly heart, still in that little fragile form was concentrated all the love and all the joy his marriage had ever brought to Lionel.

Lord Stanford smiled gravely, when, on the first day of their arrival, on his way from the dining-room, after dinner, Lionel went up stairs to ask whether the child were the worse for its journey. His father proceeded into the drawing-room, and told the two ladies sitting there of his son's errand.

"If Lionel had half-a-dozen children, he would not be so anxious," remarked he, drily. He did not know that Florence never went near the nursery. She, on her part, was not quite sure that Lord Stanford's words were not a premeditated satire on herself, every home affection cast aside, her every wifely duty unfulfilled, but she put a good face on it, and carried it off well.

"I believe he thinks it is the only child in

the world," said she, "and though those two nurses have nothing on earth to do but to fuss over it, Lionel always fancies it may come to some harm."

Lord Stanford looked at her scrutinisingly, he did not understand her conduct either then, nor for many a long day to come. He made no reply, but he remarked some time after, to Lady Stanford, "that if Lionel was foolishly fond of the child; Florence was very rational about it, far too rational to make a very good mother."

This was the very last character to which Florence aspired; she never troubled herself about her child's welfare; she rather prided herself on never seeing it except by chance. Lady Stanford used to have it brought down to her dressing-room, she could not always escape it there, though she sat less with the invalid than she had done the previous year. Their country neighbours, who duly came to call on Mrs. Gresham were wont to ask to see



the baby thinking to gratify the young mother, and Florence would ring and send for it with all due politeness; but it was remarked that she never took it in her arms, or responded to the praises of other mammas; her best epithet for it was "poor little misery." Many as fine and fashionable a lady as Florence would have been proud of the child, which really was a very pretty one, but she fancied the contempt she cast on the poor little innocent redounded on Lionel, and punished him for being so fond of it.

This was the more ungrateful of her, as at this very time Lionel was in deep disgrace with his father, and that, too, because he was too honourable to throw the blame where it was merited, namely, on his wife.

Early in this history, we casually mentioned that there was a pleasant little surprise in store for Lionel, in the shape of bills contracted by Florence. Lady Vaughan—it is deplorable to think what a course of moral degradation a well-born and honourably nurtured woman must

have gone through, to bring her to such a pass of meanness—had taken care that her daughter's *trousseau* should be procured after, not before her marriage. At the time Lionel had been told that the hurry was the cause of this delay, but he never heard of the existence of these bills, till they were put into his hands in Lady Vaughan's presence at Leamington.

Florence, though she braved it out, was in her heart ashamed of her share in this deception; with respect to money and monetary transactions, she, since her residence in England, had acquired very different views to those held by her needy, extravagant mother; but she could not altogether throw the obloquy on Lady Vaughan, for she herself had spent quite as much since her *trousseau*, as upon it. By way of quieting Palmyre—to say nothing of gratifying the taste in dress, which had grown upon her, and been indulged the more since she had become in a manner celebrated for her toilet — Florence had

sent enormous orders to Paris, and Lionel, who all this time had been deluded enough to fancy his wife was dressing upon the hundred a-year he paid her quarterly, was horrified to see single items which amounted to quite half that sum.

Her presentation dress cost fifty guineas, and a gold and white brocade he well remembered her wearing on occasion of Mr. and Mrs. Gresham having been bidden by the Lord Chamberlain to a concert at Buckingham Palace—it was the last time he had been seen in public with her—after he had patiently added up the items, proved to have been worth no less than seventy-five pounds.\* To make a long story short, between her London and Paris tradespeople, Florence owed little short of a thousand pounds.

Lionel had one day been amused by reading in a French journal, which he found lying on the drawing-room table in Lowndes Street, a

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\*These numbers are literally, as well as figuratively true.

tirade against the expense and magnificence of ladies' dress just at this epoch, but till now he had no idea, nor have many other gentlemen, of half the extent of this growing evil of the present day. He was dreadfully annoyed when the truth burst upon him, so annoyed that he said not a word.

"There Florence," exclaimed Lady Vaughan, as Lionel left the room, "you need not have made such a fuss about a few bills, and talked of my paying for your *trousseau*. Is there another man on earth, who would have taken a demand for such a sum so quietly? You choose to set yourself against Lionel, like a child quarrelling with its bread and butter, but you may thank your stars I secured you a husband, who would bear so patiently with your humours and extravagance."

"The less said about your share in that matter the better," retorted Florence, bitterly; "it does not reflect any great credit on either of us. But," said she, checking herself, "there

is no use quarrelling about it now, only mark my words we have not got the money for these bills, nor heard the last of them yet."

Since her marriage, Florence seemed to have put no restraint on her many costly and luxurious tastes. She left all household arrangements to her husband, and only gave orders just when it pleased her, or when she fancied any change. Consequently, Lionel, who, with a good allowance, had seen no great necessity for economy, had found their expenses far exceeded his expectations. He had, however, paid everything before they left London; but, as he was well aware, it was only by dipping into the second half-year's income he had done this; and in a long solitary walk he made up his mind to acquaint Florence with this fact.

Lady Vaughan was in the room, or perhaps his wife would not have listened so politely to his statement.

"If we had not Sutton Priors to fall back

upon, I do not know how we should manage," said he, in conclusion; "and, as for these bills, I really have not the money at my banker's to pay them, nor a quarter of the sum."

Florence sat doggedly silent. Lady Vaughan suggested borrowing the money.

"Borrow it on a post obit!" exclaimed Lionel in horror; "no, I never could consent to that—I had rather ask my father for it at once."

"That would be the best and indeed the only plan," remarked Florence.

"That would obviate every difficulty," chimed in her mother.

It was very easy for these two extravagant, self-indulgent women to say this; but Lionel looked upon it as anything but a pleasant necessity. He plainly stated to Florence that if he did so, this must never occur again; and considering her disposition and temper, she took his remonstrance with tolerable patience.

but though he might reason with her on the inconvenience and discomfort of running into debt, it was in vain he attempted to convince her that it was morally wrong to squander these sums on such a selfish gratification and puerile vanity as dress. She would not listen to him ; self-denial, and self-abnegation formed no part of her creed, to please herself, to make herself as comfortable as circumstances would allow, was the utmost stretch of her philosophy ; as for the higher motives of right and wrong, she laughed them to scorn.

Lionel asked his father for the money. Such a request, heralded in, as it were, by the knowledge of Frank's involvements, filled Lord Stanford with wrath and indignation. He used very harsh language, and bitterly reproached his son, for what he considered so great a deviation from the path of rectitude. It was not likely that under these circumstances Lionel should shelter himself by putting forward the real delinquent, and Lord Stanford

gave him the money, but never asked how it had been spent. Intuition told Lionel that his father had never liked Florence, and a certain sense of chivalry and honour, which formed an integral part of his character, made him on this, as on many other occasions, shield her from the obloquy she so justly deserved. He felt that his wife was liked and esteemed everywhere better than in his own home, and by his own family, it was a thought that pained him—he was too high-minded and noble, even when writhing under a sense of injuries inflicted by her to endure the thought of her receiving from him or his the retribution which was her due.

Poor Lady Stanford ; she had to stand by and see her husband and her son estranged, and yet, for no fault of her beloved Lionel's. He never kept any circumstance long from his mother ; but then she was always pledged to secrecy. Was it to be wondered at that many



a time during that long and miserable winter, Lady Stanford thought with regret on him, who slept so peacefully beneath the sod in Sutton churchyard; she never entered the sacred edifice without a pang; she little wondered to see the old women in their red cloaks, and grey-headed, hoary men, in country smock frocks, diverge on their way to the porch, to take a look at the grave, where the grass now grew so fresh and green. With the Dean to console, with him to comfort and advise, she had better borne it.

It was hard to see her own and only son's young life so completely darkened. And if there is one thing more painful to read on a loved face, than even deep and overwhelming grief, it is that disciplined resignation, which tells of so much disenchantment, so many links in life's chain, once bright and glittering, grown rusted and dim with the tears of the soul.

All those eccentricities of temper, those bursts of passion and of violence, which had formerly mingled with Lionel's attacks of silence and of gloom were gone—utterly passed away. A harsh or angry, a complaining or reproachful word never passed his lips. He was not happy, for depression was the rule, cheerfulness the exception now. The pursuits which had once pleased him, were followed mechanically; he hunted, he shot, he rode out with his wife, he talked politics with his father, but his heart was not in the one any more than in the other. The only object that won a real, genuine, happy smile, like those of other days, was his child; and the little thing soon learnt to hold out her arms, and testify her delight in seeing him, by a thousand infantine gestures. Lady Stanford thought there was a keener sting, a bit-terer reproach to Florence, in those momentary ebullitions of tenderness than in all the long hours Lionel would sit without speaking—his

lips pressed against each other, his expressive, melancholy eyes cast down, or fixed on a book, taken up more as a pretext for silence, than for any amusement it afforded him.

## CHAPTER XII.

A perfect woman nobly planned  
To warn, to comfort, and command ;  
And yet a spirit still and bright,  
With something of an angel light.

WORDSWORTH.

BASIL MOHUN had passed all his spare time since we last saw him, at Furley Grange. He infinitely preferred the solitude and melancholy grandeur of his own old tumble-down home, to the racket and splendour of the new country house, inhabited and kept constantly filled with gay folks, by his relations, the Edmonstones.

The prospect of a new family's coming to reside at the cottage, was great news in the little fishing hamlet of Furley; and the old

sailor, who daily provided Basil's table with soles and whiting, was the happy man who first informed the ancient house-keeper at the Grange of this wonderful event. Mrs. Brown generally honoured her master with a matitudinal visit, ostensibly to ask him what he would like for dinner, but in reality to indulge her colloquial powers—which were sorely circumscribed, it being beneath her dignity to hold converse with the one solitary, red armed, red faced, hulking country girl, who constituted her staff; and Basil's moustached and bearded dragoman, though professing to speak all the languages under the sun, was not as great an adept in the English, as in certain Eastern tongues.

However, she was a good, faithful old creature, and the recollection of happy passages in his childhood, connected with the snug sanctum Mrs. Brown still inhabited, made Basil always tolerant of her prejudices, and generally toler-

ably attentive to her long rigmaroles. Her observations, nevertheless, did not always excite the same interest she managed to create on one especial September morning.

"You've heard we are going to have neighbours, sir, at the cottage," remarked the old woman; having dismissed the discussion relating to the supplies.

"No," said her young master; "I hear no news you do not bring me, Mrs. Brown. But who are these people — farmers I suppose?"

"Indeed, no, sir," returned the house-keeper indignantly; "not farmers, but real quality. Mrs. Gresham and her family; you may not recollect the name, sir, but it's Lord Stanford's only brother's widow. I remember her coming on a visit here, as a bride. It was almost the last company we had—you were at school, sir. She was a nice, pleasant spoken lady as ever I saw."

"Do you mean that the Dean of C——'s

wife and family are coming to live at the Cottage?" asked Basil, with awakened curiosity.

"Yes, sir, so I hear, it's all settled, and they're to be in by Michaelmas. And now, I come to think of it, last week when I went up to the farm to speak to Mrs. Drouett about a fowl for your dinner, sir, I met a young gentleman and lady a riding down the lane. She was a sweet, pretty creature, to be sure, with cheeks the colour of a China rose. And the gentleman, he drew out of the way so as not to spatter me, for if you remember, sir, there had been a heavy shower. And says I to myself, that's real quality—no farmer's son ever gets out of the way for an old woman like me."

Mrs. Brown was a staunch aristocrat in her way. She continued—

"I did not think to ask Mrs. Drouett who it was, but I mind now she did say she had not been able to send down, for that they'd had

some of the family over from Sutton, and were all in a bustle, and, if I'm not mistaken, this young lady is not Mrs. Gresham's own daughter; the Dean was married twice, sir; Mrs. Norton, she's housekeeper at Sutton Priors, was at school with me when I was a young girl—we don't often meet now—but she told me once when I went over to Sutton Priors, about getting my niece into Lord Stanford's family as housemaid; well, she told me then, how as it was likely her young master and the eldest Miss Gresham would make a match of it, and she spoke of her as though there wasn't her equal on earth."

"My good Mrs. Brown, you have made some mistake; Mr. Gresham married a Miss Russell before he was twenty-one," remarked Basil, quietly; "I doubt not Miss Gresham is a very charming young lady, but she has not married her cousin," and he turned back to his books.



"No, sir, asking your pardon." rejoined Mrs. Brown; "I know she has not. Mrs. Norton came over here a year ago, come Christmas, to inspect the Cottage; there was a talk of this gentleman and his bride coming to live there, and I says, when we were taking a social cup of tea, Mrs. Norton, says I, so we're to have the young lady you spoke of in our parts?"

"'No,' says she, quite short, 'no such luck; our young master's wife is a very different sort of a person.'

"La!" says I, "I thought Mr. Gresham was to marry his cousin.

"'Was to,' says she, 'ain't is. Things have turned out very different from what we expected.' She would not speak out; Mrs. Norton's a very careful body; but I fancy it was a great disappointment to the family."

"Ah! was that the case? Well, good

morning, Mrs. Brown," and Basil began to write, which was usually the signal that he had listened long enough.

Somehow or other, his pen did not fly so swiftly as usual that morning. His portfolio was closed in despair, and a book supplied its place, but he soon found himself reading the same sentence over and over again, and yet was none the nearer to the author's meaning.

"Pshaw!" muttered he, "what folly this is."

If it was folly, at any rate it occupied his mind for some time longer, as he paced slowly up and down the long, arched room.

"I wonder whether she was in love with him," said he at length, aloud, "or whether it was an arranged affair, which was broken of by mutual consent, when both parties grew older and wiser."

This solution of the problem, occupying his mind, seemed satisfactory, for he drew a long

breath, as though relieved from an unpleasant thought, yet he did not settle back to his usual tranquil avocations, but taking his gun, set forth with the purpose of shooting, but, in reality, more for the sake of a long ramble over the downs and among the woods, than from any hope of meeting with much sport.

A week after, Mrs. Brown informed her master that the furniture had arrived at the Cottage, "come from Sutton Rectory they tell me, sir," added she.

Another day she reported that two young ladies had been over in a pony chaise, "setting things to rights." Then the servants came who were to form the new establishment, and if Mr. Mohun had been curious, she could have enlightened him exactly as to what joints had been ordered in for their consumption.

At last, one Sunday in church, Basil's own eyes informed him that not only Miss Gresham, but her brother Frank, and certain other persons and personages unknown were occupying the

square pew opposite his own, which had stood empty for so many years.

Miss Gresham wore a thick black crape veil, but it was raised during the sermon, and where he sat Basil could just catch a view of her profile, as she turned her face towards the pulpit, and fixed her eyes on the preacher. Ah ! what an ocean of feeling lay in the pure depths of those grave, earnest eyes, an ocean of faith, of hope, of love, and of a woman's reverence for high and holy things. Basil's thoughts, involuntarily flew back to the time when he had last seen her, when tears had dimmed those soft, expressive orbs, and when every feature had been convulsed with grief.

Other people remembered it too, for when Basil, who had hung back to allow Mrs. Gresham and her party to precede him out of church, reached the porch, he found Frank waiting to speak to him. One would not have thought from the guardsman's hearty shake of

the hand, that the two had never met but once before.

As they walked down the lane, Basil said something of having had Furley so long to himself, that he was really glad to have some neighbours.

"I am afraid," returned Frank, "that you will find us no great acquisition for some time to come. I go to London to-morrow, and my mother has, as yet, seen no one. Do you stay here all the winter?" added he, enquiringly.

"Yes, I did not get through a tithe of the business that brought me over last summer; I dare say, next year, that from Easter till the end of the session I shall be kept dangling about the Foreign Office just in the same way."

"It is very tiresome," remarked Frank.

"I do not mind it so very much, it keeps me in England, at any rate," rejoined Basil.

"This is a good part of the country for sport," suggested Frank.

"So it is," said Basil, "but I cannot afford to hunt, and Lord Stanford preserves so strictly, and feeds so much, that I have to walk, on an average, at least six miles for every brace of partridges I kill; however, it gives me exercise, and that is something.

This idea amused Frank vastly.

"It is rather too bad," said he, "but if one begins to think of the evils of preserving game, it is quite endless. I always thank my stars I am never likely to be a landed proprietor, I should not like to have to settle so knotty a point."

Basil smiled.

"At any rate," proceeded Frank, "my conscience is not so tender but that I can shoot preserved game! my uncle has given me leave to go out just as much as I like, when I am down here, and, at Christmas, I hope we shall have some good sport together."

Mr. Mohun cordially acknowledged this invitation.

"There are a great many poachers about here, that is the worst of it," remarked Basil.

"So Lord Stanford says, but he will not allow his keepers to have affrays with them. Now at Sutton, what with taking natural born sportsmen as beaters and under-gamekeepers, my uncle has got every man, who is likely to take that turn in his pay. But then, there we know all the people so well," added Frank.

"Really here, nobody does anything for the poor," returned Basil. "My old housekeeper makes broth for some of the sick and ill, and I would willingly help them, but I don't know how, and beyond a "good day" to the men, I have no communication with them."

"What is the clergyman about?" asked Frank, who had been used to a very different state of things.

"That good-looking, middle-aged gentleman you heard preach to-day, is the rector of the parish," answered Basil," but he has another living where he resides, four miles off,

and unless there is a burial or marriage, he never comes near us in the week."

"It is very wrong," said Frank, sententiously.

"I feel as if it I were, in part, accountable, for, except those two farms of Lord Stanford's all the land in the parish is mine," rejoined Basil. "Upon the strength of which I wrote to our Diocesan, and asked for two services and a resident curate."

"And do you mean to say you did not get either?" ejaculated Frank, whose theological education had by no means been neglected.

"No, I received a courteous answer, but the most reverend prelate regretted he could make no change in Mr. Morant's lifetime. And for my satisfaction, Morant, though nearly twenty years my senior, has quite as good a life as mine."

"I'd back you," laughed Frank, "you broad-shouldered active fellows never grow old, but live for ever."



"I shall not die of apoplexy perhaps," said Basil, with a grave smile, "but the wear and tear of life in a climate like that of Persia, plays the bear with a man's youth. When I came home the other day and shaved off my beard and moustache, that I might look like other people, I could hardly believe it was the same fellow, who ten years ago, started in life a beardless boy."

"You have not been out of England ever since?"

"No. I have been backwards and forwards. As long as I staid in Europe, and was an unpaid attachè, I could get leave; but in these last six years I have never once come home. This is the turning to the Grange," said he, interrupting himself; "will you come up with me and have some luncheon?"

"No, thank you," was the rejoinder; "my sisters are waiting for me over the field yonder. Good-bye; we shall see see a good deal of you at Christmas, I hope."

Basil heartily re-echoed this wish. In the meantime he contented himself with sending game occasionally, and ripe figs, and October peaches, perpetually, from his antique sunny garden, to the cottage, with his compliments, Mrs. Brown having informed him that Mrs. Gresham's own garden was too newly-made to be of much use; and, in return, he got messages of thanks, with which he was obliged to content himself. He heard of his new neighbours occasionally; there was a poor girl dying of consumption in the little hamlet down by the sea, and Miss Gresham's kindness in visiting her, and Mrs. Gresham's in sending her little dainties, was loudly talked of by the long neglected parishioners.

Mrs. Homewood, who had been struck blind years before, by a flash of lightning, told him—

“The one or other of the young ladies came down quite every other day to read her a chapter. And, sure, even Miss Fanny, who

they tell me is not more than ten years old, does read quite beautiful. And her little grandson, who worked in the garden, why if they had not begun to teach him his letters ; "sure Dick will live to be a scholard." And Miss Gresham herself, when she offered her her humble thanks for the same, answered she should be glad if she could get a little school of both boys and girls ; she was thinking of trying to get some children together on Sundays, if she could."

This was all very true. Diana had not imagined that in these enlightened days, such a neglected place was to be found in rich, prosperous England. But this is no hypothetical case ; it is not so very seldom that you meet with a parish where there is but one alternate service. The clergyman resides in one parish, and professes to perform the duties of two. If the first is well looked after, it is as much as we can expect ; the other generally takes care of itself. This is being, at least, fifty years

behindhand ; and yet the parson's daughters would be dismayed if their bonnets, or their dresses, were so much as five years in the rear of the fashion. There are two sides to every picture. There are plenty such sluggards as these—plenty such men as the Dean of C——.

At last Basil met, face to face, those of whose good deeds he heard so often. About two miles off, over the fields, but twice that distance by the road, was a little miserable church, whose pastor like the Rector of Furley, held two cures of souls. It was a very cold and disagreeable walk ; and Basil, who went over there one Sunday afternoon, quite by chance, was surprised to see Diana and her two younger sisters already seated in the one high square pew the church boasted. Miss Gresham made a little acknowledgment of his entrance, it could hardly be called a bow. Something in her face made Basil know she remembered their last parting. Alice made room for him, and Fanny,

with a blush, offered him her book and read out of the same as her sister.

It was the last month of the year, and the afternoons soon grew dark ; so Basil trusted he was not intrusive when he walked out after the sisters, and offered to escort them home, for the day-light was waning fast.

“Thank you !” was Miss Gresham’s answer ; and, after shaking hands she continued—“It was morning service here last Sunday, and we did not know it would be so late when we came out this afternoon.”

Did Basil’s conscience smite him, when he thought of these three young delicate girls walking, Sunday after Sunday, to a distant church, which he had always told himself was too far off for him to attend regularly ?

Basil Mohun had a greater sense of religion than most men of the world ; in his life he had had a great deal of time for thinking ; his had not been a very happy, nor a very prosperous

existence. This, perchance, might not have been enough to convince him that this world is not all we have to live for, for many a man hardens himself in his poverty or his misfortune, and thinks if he had been richer, and more fortunate, he would not have rebelled against Heaven and Heaven's decrees. But, at the age of five-and-twenty, Basil had met with a very serious accident. When a man lies for weeks and weeks on a bed, which may be that of death, he sees his past acts, and the future, before him, in a very different light from that in which he views them when in all the pride of youth and health.

In his childhood, Basil had been taught very little religion ; but, as the Bible tells us, we are by nature "desperately wicked," surely there is no greater proof of the much contested point of regeneration in baptism, than the almost involuntary turning from evil to good, of some who have had no other visible means of grace

than the holy waters which have sealed their infancy.

Basil had lived for so many years, so far removed from any outward ordinances of the Christian faith, that, perhaps, others might not have blamed him so severely, as he did himself on this memorable occasion.

Their new friend walked to the very gate of the cottage with the Miss Greshams. It is to be doubted whether Alice or Fanny ever opened their lips the whole way, but they listened attentively, and were kind enough to allow Basil to walk beside their elder sister on one side, though they kept very close to her on the other.

Arrived at their own domain, Diana asked Mr. Mohun to come in.

"I think the change of seeing you would be good for mamma."

Strange to say, cold and formal as she was often thought there was nothing of this in her manner towards him now.

"I will not take Mrs. Gresham by surprise this evening, but another day, if I may, I shall be delighted to call."

"My brother Frank is coming the week after next," and so they parted.



## CHAPTER XIII.

There passed a weary time.

COLERIDGE.

Sorrow, there seemeth more of thee in life  
Than we can bear and live, and yet we bear.

LOWELL.

It may be doubted whether our heroine had ever spent so unhappy a three months as the last, or whether she had ever yet in the whole course of her life been so really useful to others. It was, as it is phrased, "time that the family should be recovering their spirits;" and gradually, since their removal from Sutton, Mrs. Gresham had resumed all those duties and cares, which, in the time of affliction, she had so completely laid aside. With her happiness, nevertheless, she seemed to have resigned all that remained of her youth. She had been as

handsome, cheerful, and happy hearted a matron as you could wish to see, and it was not only in Diana's fancy that her step-mother looked aged and care-worn, but the sad, truth, that her husband's death had brought upon her, with all their weight, years which had never been felt before.

In proportion as Mrs. Gresham took them upon herself, our heroine had lost those occupations, which, if an exertion, had yet been of great service to her in enabling her to bear up against the outward pressure of grief. Diana did not feel, though every one else saw how entirely her step-mother depended on her. Mrs. Gresham had been accustomed to be led, and now she thrust the reins entirely into her step-daughter's hands. Diana must give an opinion, decide and consult with her upon the smallest points of every day occurrence. Alice and Fanny must not even begin a new work on history, or look into a more advanced grammar without their elder sister's sanction.

Diana had been the only one of his daughters in whose education Dr. Gresham had himself taken any share. Before Milly was old enough to profit by his instructions, the business connected with his Deanery had occupied and engrossed all his former leisure. Diana begged hard to be allowed to assist her mother by reading with Alice, and finally entreated for permission to undertake the entire education of little Georgie ; but Mrs. Gresham would surrender neither. She very truly said teaching was her only resource, while Diana liked reading and study for reading's sake. Besides she urged that after a time Diana would be going away for months together, and then she should feel it difficult to go on with what she had begun. Mrs. Gresham was quite aware of her own deficiencies, but it was strange that a woman who never made a mistake in chronology, who knew precisely what kings and kaisers had been about, from the time Ninus reigned in Nineveh, who could have baffled De

Porquet himself in the rules of his grammar, should have so little real intellectual culture. She did not profess to care for learning, but she was practically acquainted with every step on the ladder.

Beyond what pursuits she could make for herself, our heroine, therefore, had no one source of interest, hardly of occupation. In losing her father, in leaving her home, she seemed, at one blow, to have been deprived of everything. In former days, dreams and imaginations had filled up every vacant corner of both mind and heart; they had been perforce resigned; but then she had had, herself, her own treacherous feelings to conquer and subdue—no easy task. From the time of Milly's engagement till her marriage, from her sister's marriage to her father's death, from that sad epoch till they left their home, Diana had hardly ever had time to fold her hands, and in quiet and in silence to look into her own mind.

A character without peculiar traits would have gone droning on, or perhaps have only quarrelled with Furley for being a dull, out-of-the-way place. This, to our heroine, was the greatest charm of their new home. She could sit for hours under the shelter of the rocks, watching the children at play on the sands, and rejoiced in never seeing another human being; but solitude and silence were hardly the cure for these mental throes, these restless struggles, this hungering and thirsting after an unseen, an unknown, an unattainable something, which, following on a past season of painful excitement, and succeeding a long inward contest, oppressed and weighed her down to earth, and deprived her of all inward peace. The body suffers from long continued and perpetual exertion, so does the mind from over tension. Diana was half frightened at the causeless anxiety she often felt, at the influence trifles exercised upon her peace, she could conceal this painful nervousness from

others ; but she felt it acutely herself, and vainly struggled to master and overcome it.

She tried to give up thinking, and to this end laid aside her drawing, as a sort of busy idleness, which only allowed too much time for reflection, and forced herself to read and write, as had been her wont in other days ; but there was no magic in her books, no charm in mere occupation, of avail in filling up the aching void, the dreary blank, which lay before her, as each day she rose to dread its weary length as it rolled along, as each night she laid her head on her pillow, and wondered whether if hers were a long life, how she should ever to the end patiently endure this heavy burden. It was sympathy her heart so yearned for, and yet she did not know it ; if any one had said to her, it is for love you so thirst, it is for appreciation you so hunger, you cannot live without something to which to devote yourself, without some one on whom to lavish all the warmth and intensity of your nature, Diana

Gresham would not have believed it. She often told herself she had done with love; but real life does not end in a catastrophe like a novel, or a drama; and it has been the lot of many a one to feel like our heroine, as if she had arrived at the last pleasurable page of thought and feeling, as though all the interests of life had drawn to a conclusion, and that the next step must be out into sheer nothingness.

Mrs. Gresham perceived that her daughter was daily growing paler and more thin, and, fancying she overtaxed her mental powers, urged upon her the claims of their poorer neighbours. To many a home accordingly, one sick and sad at heart herself, brought consolation and comfort. Ellen Langley—the poor consumptive girl, died with thanks and blessings on her lips; but if her last words hovered over her, they did not yet come home to our heroine. It is wisely ordered that good works, and a strict fulfilment of duty do not immedi-

ately bring their reward, else human sophistry would be ready to pronounce that these were all. Diana felt an almost morbid pain, in the sight of sorrows and afflictions, she was so powerless to remedy. It was the old story of sitting down to bemoan her inability to regenerate social evils, she had little faith in her own attempts at alleviation, it was, perhaps, this very humility, which gave her simple, unostentatious efforts so much efficacy.

An unhappy frame of mind is not always an irreligious one. True it is that religion gives to this life its aims and aspirations ; but it is vain to suppose that it brings perfect peace, or entire happiness ; it is not a panoply which shields us from mutability of feeling, or many a stormy gust of mental suffering, any more than it does from bodily pain and grief. It does yet more than this—it gives us hope to bear, and strength to suffer, and, above all, it holds up before our mental gaze, the solemn mysteries and holy joys of a life yet to come,



without which to look towards, men would indeed be more miserable than the most wretched of the brute creation.

Frank, when he arrived, a day or two before Christma was struck by his sister's dejection, which had grown on her, till she hardly knew how plainly it was perceptible to other eyes. He was almost as much surprised by it as Diana was by his cheerfulness and happy spirits. Six months had elapsed since his father's death, and Frank had been out in the world, and in other interests, and in the din of action his grief and regret, though lasting and sincere, had ceased to be vivid or acute. And what was more, he had never been so dependant on his father for sympathy and affection, as Diana had been, and he had not, therefore, like her, felt his loss to be the greater as each day crept on.

Her brother's advent was in reality the greatest benefit to Diana, it gave her something to think of, extraneous to both past and pre-

sent. Frank, too, brought news of Milly, which was no slight source of interest. Captain Glenney had taken a small house in London, and they had been living there ever since the beginning of November.

"I don't know what you will say to me, Di," said her brother; "but I have faithfully promised Milly I will take you back with me; she has got one nice very little spare room."

His sister was beginning to plead the impossibility of leaving home, when Frank interrupted her.

"Don't pledge yourself to refuse, Di, before you hear the terms of your invitation; Milly only prays for your company for a short time—she is sure you can be spared for a fortnight or three weeks—and I think so, too."

"I need not make up my mind to-night," pleaded Diana; "for I hope you are not going to run away directly, Frank. By-the-bye," added she, by way of getting quit of the subject, "Milly said you were asked to dine in

Hyde Park Gardens to meet her. How did you like old Mr. and Mrs. Glenny?"

Frank made a grimace indicative of his abhorrence.

"A capital dinner, everything that money could give," replied he, before Mrs. Gresham looked up and saw his gesture.

She asked for more particulars of her married daughter.

"Oh, Milly was dreadfully disappointed at not coming to Furley; but Glenny says that he has had enough of moving about, and that she shall pay you a longer visit at Easter instead."

Diana knew by Frank's face as well as if he had expressed it, that their brother-in-law did not choose to bring his wife now, because he thought that Christmas time was likely to be charged with sad retrospections, in which he, at any rate, had no share.

"Nothing could behave better about it than Milly did," continued Frank; "but she was

not the less sorry, that she tried to put a good face on the matter. I dined there last night; and you should have seen her countenance brighten when Glenney proposed in jest that she should accompany me. She was half disposed to take him at his word."

"I wish she had," sighed Mrs. Gresham.

"She was quite right not, she did not even desire it on second thoughts," said Frank. "But that was one reason why I promised to use all my influence with Di."

"I think you must go and see poor Milly," said Mrs. Gresham, looking wistfully at her eldest daughter.

Di was only waiting for any expression of feeling on her mother's part to decide her. Satisfied on this head, Mrs. Gresham wished to hear how Milly managed, whether she looked very childish at the head of her own table, &c? But it was something to see her interested in anything not connected with her loss.

"She improves in appearance every time I see her," was Frank's prompt reply. "That day, dining with the old Glennys, I arrived the first, and thought her the prettiest little fairy I ever saw, coming in, dressed in rustling silk, with about a dozen flounces; she looked so small by her great hulking lord and master. Why Alice, you are taller than Milly, and half as big again."

Alice laughed and blushed.

"Milly had rather dine out than order dinner at home, I suspect," continued Frank.

This was just the sort of homely communication which delighted Mrs. Gresham, and she asked a host of questions in a breath.

Frank answered to the best of his ability, he could not give much real information but he hazarded the opinion that—"Milly would be the better for a few hints on housekeeping."

Diana saw through her brother's cautious manner, this was quite enough to arouse

her fears, and she made an excuse to remain in the drawing-room, after her mother had retired that night, in order to pursue her enquiries.

"There's nothing to take hold of, nothing to complain of in 'dear St. Clair's' treatment of his little slave," said Frank, "but Milly is a slave, I always said she would be, Di."

"But what makes you think she is?" urged his sister.

"I can't say, you will see when you get there. That is one reason I wish you to go, Di; at any rate, if you can do nothing else, you could give Milly a little advice about her dinners, and really the nuisance of dining - there is the fuss that fellow makes about the cooking. And yet I hardly wonder he is put out, I should be if I never had anything but mutton for dinner, and the only change that it is underdone and raw one day, or burnt to a cinder the next."

Di smiled at this acmè of grievances.

"If that is all, Milly will soon do better," rejoined she, more cheerfully. "I never knew anything of housekeeping till this year."

Frank did not make any direct reply, but as he lighted her candle, he muttered something about its being a mistake to suppose clever girls had no common sense.

The first thing after breakfast the next morning, Frank announced his intention of walking up to Furley Grange.

"Have you seen anything of Mohum, lately?" asked he.

"I thought I wrote you word of our meeting at church, and of his coming to call," answered Di.

"He has been here two or three times since," added Mrs. Gresham, "we like what we have seen of him very much."

The Grange was a very handsome old place, but a belt of fir trees and an old stone wall so

fenced it off on the village side, that Frank had no idea of the real beauty of the Park, half open upland, half broken wooded ground, till he crossed the upper end of the valley which divided what had, in old times, been a chase, from the long, undulating, grassy ascent, on the summit of which the house itself stood, a heavy mass of dark grey buildings, commanding a view of the sea on the one side, and of almost as boundless a range of tree and fell, hill and dale on the other. Frank almost fancied he could see the sand bank that rose high above the entrance of Sutton village, he was sure he could make out a clump of fir trees which grew on the summit of a neighbouring hill. It did not require a very practised eye to discern, even before reaching the house, that the lord of Furley was not a wealthy man. The carriage road, which Frank had crossed, was so overgrown with verdure, that had it not been for a few traces of cart-wheels, it



would have been hardly distinguishable from the park through which it wound.

The pathway, which led to the village, was reached from the road by a double flight of wooden steps against the park wall, and by a similar contrivance, a high iron railing dividing the same into two parts, was surmounted, plainly bespeaking that, once upon a time, deer, those semi-domesticated, semi-nomade animals ranged here, but they were all gone now, and their places occupied by herds of bullocks, and a drove of colts and old horses, whose presence made it very clear to Frank that Basil Mohun had been reduced to let off his Park as grazing ground to one of the neighbouring farmers.

The precincts of the house were tidy enough, and the mansion itself in tolerable repair, but it was very evident that no unnecessary money was laid out, and one old woman, sweeping up leaves, was the only sign of life which Frank

saw about the place, till he had rung the bell and disturbed a host of echoes by its noisy peal. Visitors were doubtless rare, for if he had been on the watch, he would have beheld Demetrius peep out of one of the large side windows before he ventured on so unusual an act as unbarring the great door.

In a library of noble proportions, with an arched roof, and surrounded by a chaos of books and papers, sat Basil, presenting very much the aspect—*minus* the ghosts of his ancestors and the lamp—Frank had depicted for Ethel Bingley's edification, or rather mystification.

Frank had a great respect for learning, though at this period of his life he was allowing his own mind to lie fallow, after the fashion of youth lately released from the enforced discipline of early study, and in the course of conversation, he asked Basil what he was about.

The gentleman's bronzed cheek reddened a little, as he answered—

“Writing.”

"Writing what?" persisted Frank, who had all the ease and freedom of a spoiled child of the world.

"Why, if you must know," returned Basil, with a smile, "I am seeing whether I can make anything of my knowledge of the east."

"Inditing a book?" exclaimed Frank, in some surprise.

"Yes," said Basil, "I was talking with M——y about some excursions I had made in the mountains, and he told me if I could put my ideas into anything like ship-shape, he thought the subject was a new one, and would take with the public, so I am trying what I can do."

A new topic was as great a boon to Frank Gresham as to anybody else, and he talked with Basil a good hour on the subject. When he rose to take his departure, he looked out of the windows.

"So," said he, "you have a flower garden on one side, and a sea view on the other."

"The advantages of two aspects," returned Basil. "I like sunshine, and what little there is I get the benefit of in this room, all day long. Will you come round the garden? There is a short cut down the hill to your house."

"Do you not find it dull living here for so many months together," asked his visitor, as they stepped out of the window on to the lawn.

"Not in the day time, I am so accustomed to solitude," said Basil, with a half sigh; "these long winter evenings I do find rather tedious. I do not feel disposed to take up a book directly after dinner. Then I should like some one to hold converse with."

"Will you come and dine with us some day?" said Frank, struck with a sudden sympathy, "why should you not come to-day?"

Basil's countenance expressed pleasure, but still he hesitated.

"My mother will be delighted to see you, I

am sure," urged Frank, who saw his doubt ;  
"but I am afraid you will find it very dull  
with only ourselves to amuse you."

Mr. Mohun's momentary vacillation departed  
instantly.

Frank went home and told Mrs. Gresham  
what he had done. He was quite aware she  
would not have objected to anything he pleased  
to suggest, she seemed to consider that he was  
invested with all his father's authority, and  
certainly in her estimation he shared the poor  
Dean's immunity from wrong. This might not  
have been very good for the young Guardsman,  
who had always liked his own way, and had  
been apt to be rather dictatorial, had not his  
father's death given a sort of check to his self-  
sufficiency. His faults had arisen very much  
from the early independence and prosperity,  
with which Miss Courtenay had environed him ;  
they were not inherent in his nature, and his  
good qualities outweighed them in a far greater  
degree than most people would have imagined.

It was something that he should have seen and acknowledged his error in the matter of his extravagance, and once having been led to believe he was not immaculate, had opened his mental vision to many another cherished fault. If we may be permitted to say so, his father's death had occurred at a most fortunate juncture. It had made Frank Gresham pause and think, while he was not too young to see clearly where and how he had been wrong, nor too old to repent of his folly. For it is but too true that men go on erring till their faults become inherent in their very natures, and they end by thinking that but a venial and pardonable weakness, which in the beginning they knew to be a real wrong.

Frank had turned over a new leaf, and, perhaps, part of the exuberant spirits, which at first almost oppressed his sister arose from the inward content consequent on this effort.

At all events, at the present moment he was very much pleased with his new ally, and he

imparted the history of his visit to the Grange, and all his own annotations and reflections to Diana. She, for her part, was horrified to think how sitting on the hay at Lady —— *fete champêtre*, she had talked of authors and their works to a man clever enough to be asked to write a book. She told Frank she should be afraid to talk to Mr. Mohun from henceforth.

"Nonsense!" cried her brother, "I tell you he's a capital fellow, and no more like a priggish author than I am."

Mr. Frank was a little conceited, but that was not his fault, but might be laid at the door of the woman-kind with whom he associated.

However, in this instance, he was right. Long before the evening was over Diana had forgotten all about it; Basil had the most natural, frank, open manner in the world. He had withal a serious, grave, quiet way of speaking, which accorded well with the subdued feelings of the feminine members of the party; but there was no lack of animation in

his countenance, his deep blue eyes looked you honestly in the face, and flashed and sparkled when he was interested in the conversation.

Basil was not what is called handsome ; his features were scarcely regular enough, to come under that denomination, but their general effect with his brown, waving hair, dark eyebrows and long eye-lashes, to say nothing of the eyes themselves, were quite enough, with the help of his expression, to make any woman, who really loved him, think his face perfection. Frank Gresham pronounced him just the right height, that is to say he did not exceed himself in altitude by more than half an inch.







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